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ABSTRACT

"America Goes Back to School" is a nationwide initiative to encourage and support family and community involvement in improving children's learning. The program's 1998 theme highlights year-round partnerships started or celebrated during the back-to-school months of August through October. This kit provides tools to help families and community members become more aware of and involved in education. Section 1, "You Can Help America's Students Go Back to School," suggests ways to organize back-to-school events and partnerships, presents information on the importance of family and community involvement in children's learning, and lists resources available from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 2, "The ABC's of America Goes Back to School," lists suggestions for community activities. Section 3, "Planning for America Goes Back to School," presents ways to enhance collaboration and build partnerships for learning, and includes a planning calendar and activity ideas for involving students. Section 4, "Stay Connected-U.S. Department of Education Resources," provides information on linking with other federal outreach activities such as the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and satellite town meetings. Five cards included in the kit present key facts, make suggestions for activities, and list available Department of Education resources in five areas: (1) building good citizens; (2) helping all children master the basics; (3) helping students "think college early"; (4) modernizing and strengthening the public schools; and (5) growing school leaders. (KB)

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AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

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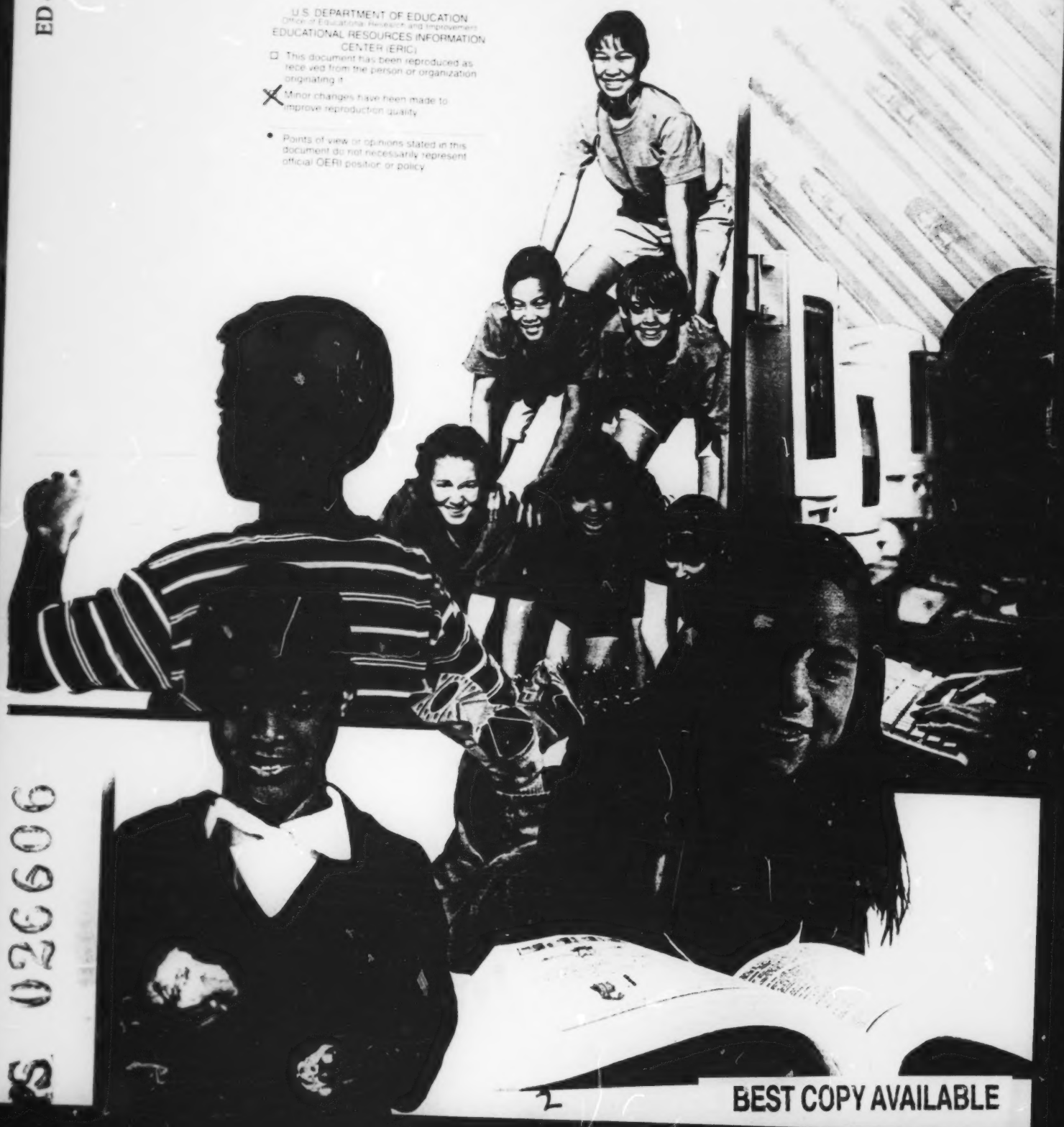

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Partners' Activity Kit

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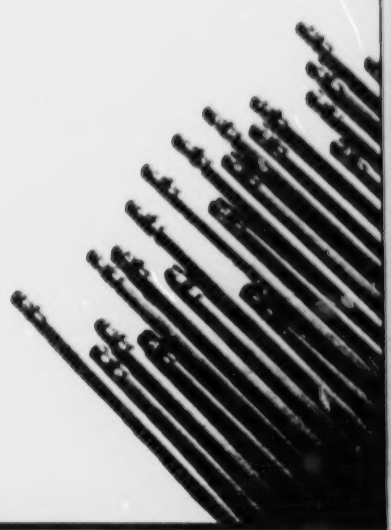

America Goes Back to School:
Get Involved! Stay Involved! is published by the U.S. Department of Education
as an initiative of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

Marshall S. Smith
Acting U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education

Terry K. Peterson
Counselor to the Secretary

Alan L. Ginsburg
Director, Planning and Evaluation Service

Adriana de Kanter
Deputy Director, Planning and Evaluation Service

May 1998

For additional copies of this document or for more information about *America Goes Back to School* or the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, contact us at:

U.S. Department of Education
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
E-mail: agbts@ed.gov
1-800-USA-LEARN

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Dear Citizen:

Thank you for your interest in *America Goes Back to School* 1998. This annual effort focuses attention on improving education across America during the back-to-school months of August through October and rallies individuals to volunteer in their communities and be involved in learning throughout the year. Schools can't do it alone. Parents, grandparents, community leaders, representatives from colleges and universities, employers and employees, members of the arts community, religious leaders, and caring adults are great resources to improve our schools.

America Goes Back to School gives you an opportunity to build awareness and support to improve your schools at a time when interest in education is already high. Take advantage of this opportunity to launch a new partnership or to encourage people to get involved in an existing partnership.

Don't hesitate to talk about what your community can do to improve education. You can enlist your local leaders and the news media to help more people learn about what they can do to help children learn and how they can get involved.

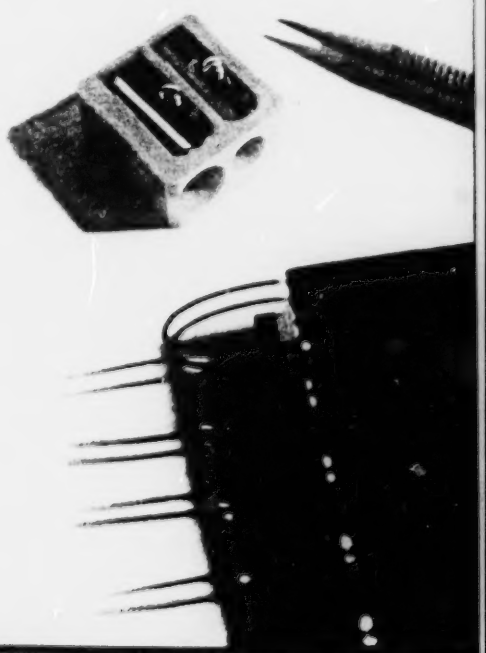
I invite you to organize a local *America Goes Back to School* event. Events that kick off the school year in a positive, exciting way can set the tone for the entire year, and they can lead to year-round partnerships and improvement efforts. This kit gives you some tools to help families and community members become more aware of, connected to, and involved in education.

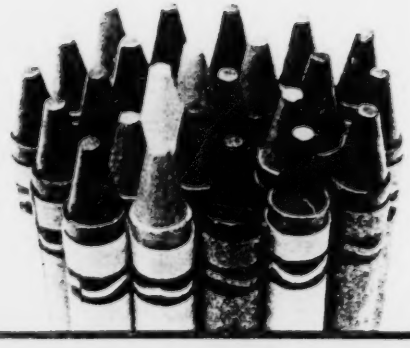
Along with the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, which sponsors *America Goes Back to School* each year, I want to thank you for your interest in family and community involvement in education. This is an extraordinary time for our nation's schools, and I ask all Americans to pitch in. After all, better education is everybody's business.

Yours sincerely,

Dick Riley

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education





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When you have planned your *America Goes Back to School* event for this fall, tell us about it! We often highlight local events in our publications and newsletters—yours could be picked and sent to hundreds of thousands of people around the United States! A response sheet is enclosed in this book to let us know about your community's *America Goes Back to School* celebration.

"If we are going to seize the promise of our times and educate our children so they can keep their dreams alive, we must all work together. Not government alone, not individuals alone, but as parents and children, employers and employees, teachers and students, community leaders and community members, as government and citizens. We must renew our schools so every American child has the opportunity to get the best possible education for the 21st century."

– President Clinton

You Can Help America's Students Go Back to School

- Join, begin or support a partnership in your community that focuses on improving children's learning.
- Help stage a public event that shows how important education is to Americans of all ages.

It doesn't matter how big or small your local *America Goes Back to School* event is. It doesn't matter what kind of event your community holds. What matters is that you and your partners use the opportunity to show your support for better education and to encourage others in your community to get involved.

Use this booklet as a resource that will help you think about how your America Goes Back to School *event and partnership can:*

- *Raise awareness* about education issues in your community. For example, the following five issues are often cited as most important:
  - Building good citizens, good character, and good discipline;
  - Helping all children master the basics, including reading and math;
  - Helping students "think college early" and prepare for careers;
  - Modernizing and strengthening our public schools; and
  - Growing our own teachers and principals in a time of shortage.
- *Uncover effective and innovative solutions* to these and other issues in your community.
- *Take action* through strong, local partnerships for learning.

Key Facts on Family and Community Involvement in Children's Learning[1]

There is a need for family and community involvement, including during out-of-school hours.

Experts say that it often takes eight reminders or notices for someone to say finally, "Hey, I've heard of that." You and your partners will want to talk up your *America Goes Back to School* event(s) and partnership wherever you go. Use the key facts on this page and the next to help make the case for family and community involvement in education in your community. You may want to create your own set of talking points, tailored to your events and partnership, for speakers to use in your community.

Seven in ten Americans say that improving the quality of public schools would be a very effective way to help kids.

Seven in ten young people say that when meeting friends, they hang out without anything specific to do. Seven in ten do not belong to any club or organization outside of school.

Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are most at risk of committing violent acts and being victims between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.—a time when they are not in school.

Research and experience show us what a difference family and community involvement makes in children's learning. Here are some key facts you can use to illustrate how important family and community involvement is to the children in your community:

Students who have one or both parents involved are more likely to get As and less likely to be suspended or expelled or to repeat a grade.

The difference in 8th-grade test scores between low-performing and high-performing states can be attributed to three factors over which parents can exercise authority: absenteeism, availability of reading materials in the home, and television watching.

Teachers say the "single most important thing public schools need to help students learn" is involved parents.

Almost half of all Americans say they would be very comfortable volunteering to be a mentor or to help in some way at a local school. Yet only one-third of Americans say they regularly participate in volunteer groups that do charity work or community service.

Over 60 percent of Americans believe that most parents face times when they need help raising their kids. People are more likely to believe that such parents are simply overwhelmed, not irresponsible.

Key Facts on *America Goes Back to School*

Thousands of events across the country take place during the back-to-school months of August to October.

Started by U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley in 1994, *America Goes Back to School* is sponsored by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, a growing grassroots movement of thousands of family-school partners, community organizations, businesses, and religious groups working together to support family and community involvement in children's learning.

America Goes Back to School participants include parents, grandparents, community leaders, colleges and universities, employers and employees, members of the arts community, religious leaders, and caring adults and young people in every state.

America Goes Back to School is a nationwide initiative to encourage and support family and community involvement in improving children's learning. This year's theme is "Get Involved! Stay Involved!" to highlight year-round partnerships started or celebrated during back-to-school time.

Resources from the U.S. Department of Education About Family and Community Involvement

The following publications are available free of charge by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN or on the Internet at **www.ed.gov**.

A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships

Employers, Families and Education

Information on the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Seven Good Practices for Families (poster)

Strengthening Your Child's Academic Future

Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Education

Summer Home Learning Recipes for Parents (Grades K-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12)

The following publications are available by calling the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

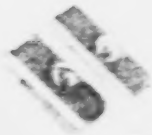
Early Childhood Digest: Families and Teachers as Partners

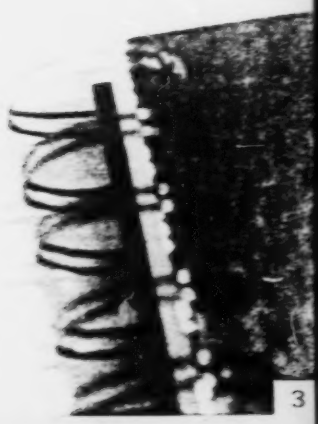
Early Childhood Research and Policy Briefs: Quality in Child Care Centers, Vol. 1., No. 1

Family Involvement in Children's Education: Successful Local Approaches

Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools

Welcome to School: Questions Parents Might Ask





The ABCs of *America Goes Back to School*[2]

Organizing an event may initially seem difficult and overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Past *America Goes Back to School* events have ranged from a picnic for one classroom of students and their families and neighbors to 10,000-person citywide back-to-school rallies. Your local school probably already does some kind of back-to-school event that could easily be expanded to bring in more of the community and to gain more attention for students and better education. Build your event and partnership as an action that will carry your community into the new century. Here is a list of possible ideas to help you start thinking about what could engage your community.

Ask your local school board, mayor, city council, state representative or governor to issue a proclamation celebrating your back-to-school event and highlighting one or more of the five key areas (building good citizens, helping all children master the basics, helping students "think college early," modernizing and strengthening our public schools, growing our own teachers and principals). Included in this kit are sample proclamations.

Begin the day with breakfast for families, community members, school leaders, teachers, and students. Food is a big draw! Host a series of breakfast forums on aspects of the five key education areas for families and the community, such as volunteering opportunities, higher standards, the school's curriculum, conflict resolution, dealing with peer pressure, linking community art, museum and cultural resources with the schools and applying to college.

Contact local arts and cultural organizations to help with your partnership. Museums, galleries, arts organizations, community theater groups, and other cultural and music groups can be valuable partners to help work with students. Look to local colleges and universities for connections with their arts groups and cultural programs.

Distribute a school calendar for students, families, and the community at large with dates of events, ideas for how to get involved and learning activities families can do at home and in the community. Make your calendar a countdown to the new century and the millennium with anecdotes and activities that reflect on the past and imagine the future.

Enlist young people to play an important leadership role in family and community involvement in education. They may be your best salespeople and invaluable leaders in the effort to keep public attention and increase public engagement. For more ideas on how young people can get involved in *America Goes Back to School*, see the section on activities for young people.

Find ways to make reading a fun part of everyday life. Community literacy and meeting the America Reads Challenge might be a focus of your *America Goes Back to School* event(s). Hold storytelling nights, guest author and poetry readings, read-aloud programs, dramatic readings,

The ABC's concept and ideas were adapted from Hand in Hand: the Florida State Department of Education, and many other local leaders in family and community involvement.

book fairs and book drives, a read-a-thon or a book report festival, family literacy nights, or other literacy activities for the whole community. Work with local colleges and universities to help get work-study students and other college students into the schools as reading tutors. Older students, such as Girl Scouts, can also work as reading tutors for younger students.

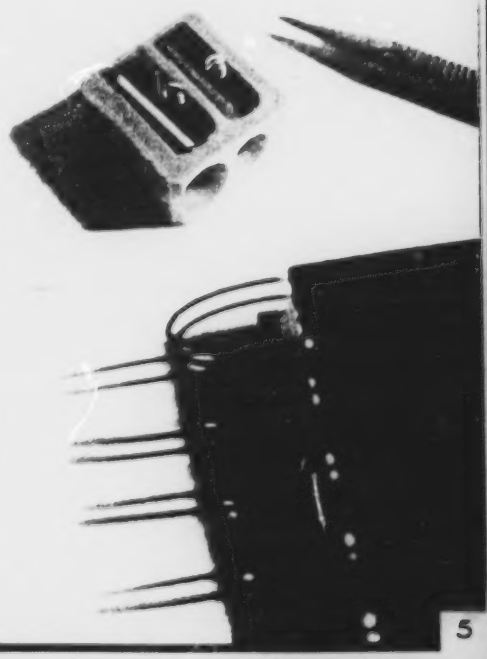
Give presentations on how community members can get involved in education at meetings of local organizations, such as the Kiwanis, Rotary Club, League of Women Voters, or Urban League, at meetings of religious groups, or at bring-your-lunch sessions with employees of area businesses. Use the five key education themes as a starting point.

Host an open house at the school for parents and community members. Hold it in the evening or on the weekend so that more people can attend. At the back-to-school picnic in Macomb, Michigan, the organizers—a teacher and a principal—asked every family to bring a member of the community to the picnic who did not have kids in the school so they could see the school and learning community firsthand and feel more comfortable with the idea of getting involved.

Initiate a parent involvement policy. Develop a compact or a student-parent-teacher pledge addressing shared responsibilities for learning. *America Goes Back to School* provides a great opportunity to convey a school's commitment to involving families and the community. Set up a parent resource center where families can come to get more information on topics of interest and where families can meet and talk with one another and with school staff.

Join together for jobs. Invite community members to come to school to talk about their careers and how what they learned in school prepared them. As a follow-up, arrange job-shadowing opportunities for students. Organize a resource information fair on career opportunities for students, parents, and the entire community. Hold a college fair so everyone can explore their options for lifelong learning and so students will begin to "think college early," early in their lives and early in the school year. Advertise your fair with the question, "What will you be doing in the next century—the next millennium?"

Kick off the new year with a special welcome for new students and families in the community. In Bennington, Vermont, local businessman Terry Ehrich worked with the local school district to hold a first-day-of-school celebration. Local businesses gave their employees time off, and



hundreds of parents went back to school with their children. Everyone involved agreed that the day was a great success!

Launch a community mentoring program where adult volunteers and college students mentor high school and middle school students who, in turn, can mentor elementary school students. Mentoring can involve learning math and science—key gate-opening courses for college-going—to a museum, community service activities, recreational activities such as a mentor basketball league, tutoring and homework help.

Make sure you involve all members of your community in your *America Goes Back to School* efforts, including families and students who are limited English proficient and who have disabilities.

Name a day or a week as your local *America Goes Back to School* time. Personalize it. In Memphis, Tennessee, the superintendent organized "Memphis Goes Back to School Week."

Organize a rally and/or a parade. Often, communities with large events have a steering committee of various interested community and school leaders, such as the school superintendent, the mayor, school board members, city council members, local business people, and representatives from organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA/YWCA, the United Way, the Boys and Girls Club, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, and the Urban League.

Present an honorary award to a local government official or local leader in recognition of his or her contribution to education in your community. Awards could be based on excellence in one of the five key education areas. Celebrate with recognition ceremonies for teachers, students, parents, and community and religious organization volunteers who have made a long-term commitment to children's learning to inspire more people to jump in and get involved.

Quiz potential volunteers about the talents, skills, and time they are willing to share. Potential volunteers can be individual community members or local businesses and organizations with specialized services, such as technology know-how. Set up a skills bank to help match volunteers to school needs. Showcase volunteers in your *America Goes Back to School* event.

Raise awareness of the importance of family and community involvement and the opportunities to get involved in education through a communitywide public relations campaign. Ask businesses to post fliers or to sponsor a billboard. Enlist local celebrities to help carry the message. Conduct a poll or survey of your community about one of the five critical areas in education and publicize the results. Hold an essay or poster contest for students.

... an article or guest column or write a letter to your local newspaper describing your event and explaining why building good citizens, mastering the basics, "thinking college early," revitalizing the schools and growing teachers and principals are so essential to improving education. Give a speech or enlist local celebrities to speak about community involvement. This kit contains talking points you can use for speeches.

Train volunteers and teachers. Whether a 2nd-grade reading tutor or an 8th-grade "algebra mentor," volunteers need training in their specific assignments. Teachers, in turn, need training in how to get families and community members involved and how to use volunteers in the classroom. Make family and community involvement a focus for professional and personal development for schools, community groups, and businesses throughout the back-to-school period.

... the resources you have. If your community has a lot of retired persons, start a senior school volunteer corps. Get your students to tutor the seniors on how to use computers. If your community has a lot of high-tech businesses, invite them to help your schools with their technology plans. If your community has a college or university, enlist federal work-study students as reading tutors. If your community has businesses, organizations, faith communities, and individuals interested in supporting schools financially, offer special community-sponsored grants to provide innovative programs and services that meet your school community's needs.

Visualize the start of the new century—the new millennium. Where will your school be in mastering each of the five key education areas? How do you picture your community in 5 years? 10 years? 50? 100? How do you picture your schools? Your children? Your future? Create a plan to make it happen, and start with *America Goes Back to School*. Whatever the challenges, think big!

"As we move toward the 21st century, nothing should be more important to us as a nation than the actions we take now to help our young people prepare for the future. Ultimately, the character of American education is going to be defined by the character and commitment of involved parents and other caring adults."

— U.S. Secretary of Education
Richard W. Riley

Work with local businesses to encourage them to allow their employees time off to come to school—to volunteer, to attend a parent-teacher conference, to find out what's going on in the schools.

X-ray your efforts to see how they're going. It's important to evaluate what you're doing to find out if you are achieving your aims and how you can improve your efforts. An evaluation can be as simple as asking people what they think or conducting a short survey. Don't let problems go unattended. If something is not working, get a group together to problem-solve and figure out a better way. Taking the time to reflect on what's happening will be worth it in the long run when you see sustained success and true collaboration in place!

Yell it from the rooftops! Make sure your entire community knows about your *America Goes Back to School* event(s). Contact your local news media outlets (newspapers, radio and television stations) to ask for their assistance in promoting your event and your partnership. Often they will write editorials, air public service announcements, or give coverage to your event. See the section "Make It Public" for more information on how to work with the news media.

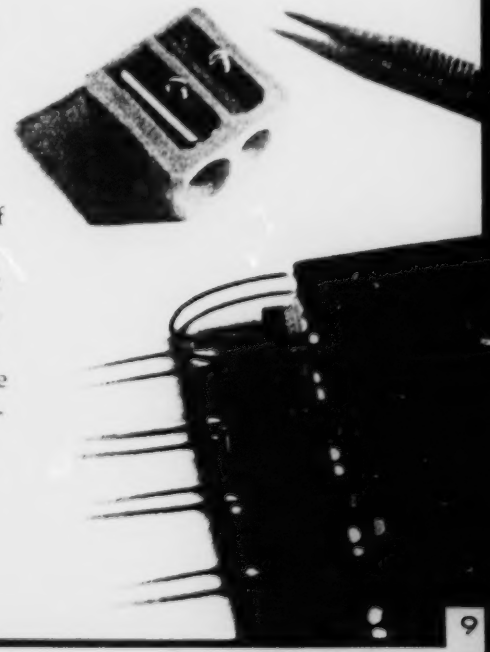
Zero in on children. As everyone gets busy planning, meeting, and working hard, don't lose sight of your ultimate goal—helping all children learn to high academic standards!

Planning for *America Goes Back to School*

Building Local Partnerships for *America Goes Back to School*

Launching an *America Goes Back to School* activity can be a challenge—don't go it alone! *America Goes Back to School* is about building local partnerships for learning in every school and community across this nation. Working together can sometimes be difficult. To make *America Goes Back to School* a successful venture in your community, you'll need a planning team made up of representatives from all over your community. Members of the *America Goes Back to School* team may not know one another, but you all have one thing in common from the get-go—an interest in and dedication to helping children learn. A strong core planning team will provide a foundation for a strong *America Goes Back to School* partnership. Here are some tips for true collaboration:[1]

- **Work Together.** Consult a wide variety of groups and citizens active in the community from the beginning of the project. Local groups and citizens must buy in and feel ownership by determining their own needs and recognizing their own capacity.
- **Assess Needs.** Help participating groups and citizens assess the needs and identify assets to meet them within the community. Develop a checklist or an assessment instrument to help gather information, with questions such as: What do you see as barriers to children's learning in our community? What are you currently doing to support children's learning in the community? How well are children being served, including children with disabilities and limited English proficient children? Think about demographic information, cultural awareness and appreciation, and language issues as you begin planning. Identify communication links and networks, so you understand how information travels and how people get connected in the community. One network might be the school system. Another equally important network might be community leaders who wear different hats (e.g., a business leader who is also a member of a faith community or a Scout leader).
- **Survey Resources.** Find out how your community would be willing to help. Think about all sectors of your community. For example, talk to employers about giving their employees time off to go back to school with their children on the first day of school, or to volunteer on a regular basis. Reach out to senior citizen groups to enlist them as reading tutors. Approach the college or university in your community to see what they have to offer. Work with local arts organizations and museums.



[1] Adapted from a set of tips on moving national initiatives to the local level developed by community organizations and religious groups in the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education.

"All of us must make it our journey—our nation's journey—to re-connect America's classrooms to America's living rooms. There's so much we can do to revitalize our schools, invigorate our students, and integrate parents into their children's learning."

— Vice President Gore

Share Information. Share information about resources that exist outside of the community. Ask community representatives from national associations and organizations about activities happening at the national level and about resources that may be available to local members to help in your planning and partnerships.

Seek Out Experienced Collaborators. Are there people in your community or state who are experienced and talented in building teams and coalitions? Ask them to give a presentation on building partnerships to set the stage. Get information and encourage discussion on how to make sure that the right players are at the table; on what the individual roles and responsibilities of participants should be, including the role of the coordinator; on how to work with the school system and schools; and on examples of successful local partnerships.

Set Goals. Set clear goals for your partnership. Make sure these goals fit with the aims of the participating organizations and people. Encourage involvement in a way that "makes sense" to your community—a way that will spark interest, fulfill needs, and match community capacity. For example, in Bennington, Vermont, small businessman Terry Ehrich pondered, "If the first day of hunting season is a state holiday, why not the first day of school?" That question resonated with the community and helped make his first-day-of-school celebration a bigger success.

Decide on Measures of Success. Based on the goals you set, what are the indicators of success? Agree on a set of indicators and how to measure them. Find out how other community organizations have measured their outcomes. School districts and businesses routinely evaluate performance. Ask for their advice and help in creating consistent and realistic evaluation tools, including means for gathering anecdotal evidence, surveys, and other reporting mechanisms. Include evaluation as a key ingredient in your partnership from the very beginning.

Use the following planning worksheet to begin to build a team and a partnership for *America Goes Back to School* and for education in your community.

Planning Worksheet: Making Plans

What is (are) the goal(s) of our *America Goes Back to School* event(s) and partnership?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What community needs are we addressing through *America Goes Back to School*?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What activities/events/partnerships can help us reach our goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Who will be involved in helping to reach the goal?

_____

_____

Name of community organization, school, business, religious group, other

_____

_____

_____

_____

Representatives name and contact information

_____

_____

_____

_____

How will we know if we have reached our goal(s)? What are indicators of success?

_____

_____

_____

America Goes Back to School Planning Calendar

By now you're thinking, "Hey! It's the end of the school year. It's summer vacation. The last thing I want to think about is going back to school next fall!" But, as you well know, summer will fly by, and it takes time to plan an event, especially an event that will launch or highlight a year-round partnership. Sketch a timeline for your *America Goes Back to School* event and partnership. Better yet, include details, such as tasks to be performed, due dates and deadlines, and persons responsible. That way, as people come and go on vacation, your planning and preparation won't come to a halt, and everyone will be ready for *America Goes Back to School* 1998.

May-June

Meet with your local school superintendent and/or principal(s) to get their support and assistance.

- Hold the first 1998 *America Goes Back to School* meeting.
  - — Select a chairperson and a single point of contact.
  - — Decide on focus and major activities. Set goals and objectives.
  - — Create a specific timetable with key tasks and assign responsibility.
  - — Designate subcommittees, with chairs, such as publicity, event management, budget, and others as needed.
  - — Establish weekly meetings of committee and subcommittees.
- Prepare a budget and secure sources of funding.
- Contact potential sponsors (e.g., media groups, area businesses, community organizations).
- Contact schools, key community organizations and area businesses, local officials, and other interested parties to generate interest.
  - — Tell them about the plans and how they can get involved.
  - — Recruit volunteers.
- Select and confirm sites and invite dignitaries for special events. Make sure you consider accessibility issues for participants with disabilities.
- Create a publicity plan and community outreach strategy.
- Submit a proclamation request to the mayor's office or other local or state official. Seek a resolution from the school board, city council, or other governing body.
- Compile a media list and other sources for communication.
- Plan a pre-event announcement, such as a press conference.
- Decide how to evaluate the success of your effort and plan for an evaluation (i.e., design surveys, designate people to observe and record the effort).

June-July

- Follow up on initial plans.
- Prepare all written materials, including press releases, copy for fliers and articles, and talking points for use in speeches. Arrange for printing.
- Confirm sponsors, event sites, and participants and speakers.

Hire or arrange for a photographer for events.

Send in the form included in this kit to let the U.S. Department of Education know about your event so it can be considered as a showcase site.

July-August

Hold pre-event announcement (This could be a proclamation signing and/or press conference.)

Distribute promotional materials.

Meet with news media representatives about advertising and coverage for events.

Confirm all volunteers and assignments.

August-September

Send news releases for events.

Roll out publicity.

Double-check details with everyone involved.

EVENT(S) August-September-October

Share your enthusiasm.

Enjoy the events!

October-November

Send thank-you letters.

Prepare final reports based on your evaluation and other input.

Meet to review your plan for sustaining public interest and involvement throughout the year.

Make recommendations for next year's kick-off.

Set the first meeting date and select a chairperson.

November-May

Keep up the momentum. Maintain volunteer efforts in the school.

Continue planning your *America Goes Back to School* event for 1999.

"By the year 2000, we should succeed in seeing that every 8-year-old can read independently, that every 12-year-old can log on to the Internet, that every 18-year-old can go on to college, and that every adult in our country can continue to learn for a lifetime."

— President Clinton

Adapted from Coletta & Company, Memphis, Tennessee, and from the National Engineers Week 1998 Guide.

...ennium: A Special Opportu... ...Communities and Schools

"It is the turn of the century. It is the turn of the millennium. But more than that it is an opportunity for us to take stock of who we are as Americans, what we believe in and what we want to carry into the next century—not only individually, or through our families, but as local communities and certainly as a nation."

—First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Begin building toward the new century—the millennium. The new millennium provides all Americans the opportunity to rediscover and reaffirm the role education plays in our lives. It provides a backdrop to stimulate conversation about how we have become the society we are at the close of the 20th century, and what we must do to ensure equal access to education that promotes academic excellence in the 21st century. It is in this spirit of honoring our educational past and imagining our educational future that the U. S. Department of Education will initiate and recognize national, state and local projects that commemorate the history of education; examine current forces shaping education; and encourage thoughtful planning for the future of education. Start thinking now about how your local community can begin to build toward the new millennium to ensure equity, access and excellence in education for your students.

The White House has already begun activities that reflect on our rich heritage and look toward the future. Hosted at the White House throughout the coming months and accessible to the public via broadcast and cybercast, "Millennium Evenings" are a series of lectures and cultural showcases that will highlight the creativity and inventiveness of the American people through our ideas, art and scientific discoveries. For more information on the Millennium commemoration, call 1-800-USA-LEARN and for updates on Millennium Evenings visit **www.whitehouse.gov**.

Celebrate the Century. The United States Postal Service is sponsoring an exciting program in which Americans can vote for the events, people, and places that best represent the 20th century (specifically the 1950s to 1990s) for a special commemorative stamp series to be issued over the next two years. Through a special focus on involving students and teachers, more than 18 million students will participate. Children ages 8 to 12 will also have the opportunity to participate in *Stampin' The Future*, a kids stamp design contest. Contest winners and other kids throughout the United States will attend the first World Kids Congress to be held in the year 2000. For more information, visit your local post office or the U.S. Postal Service Web site at **www.usps.gov/ctc**

Activity Ideas for Involving Students in America Goes Back to School

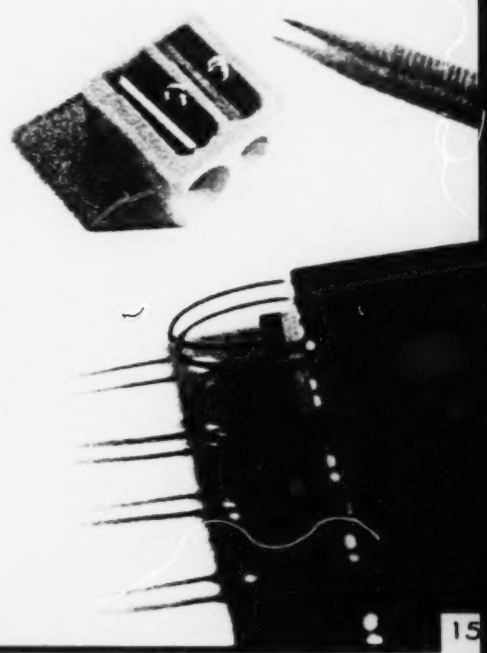
There are ways for everyone to get involved in *America Goes Back to School*. It's a great opportunity for you to build community support for your school and classroom and for students of all ages to take a leadership role in the community! By planning your *America Goes Back to School* activity during the spring before the end of school, you can recruit students to help throughout the summer.

If your *America Goes Back to School* event(s) will take place before school begins or during the first weeks of school, find out where the kids are during the summer, and find volunteers willing to coordinate *America Goes Back to School* activities specifically for children and youth. Contact summer programs, community groups that serve children, such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, 4-H, the YWCA and YMCA, and faith communities with youth groups and vacation Bible schools.

If your *America Goes Back to School* event(s) is not until a few weeks into the school year, then teachers will have a wonderful opportunity to incorporate the ideas and activities into their classroom learning, and schools can get students involved through after-school activities.

Activities for students help bring the *America Goes Back to School* message to life because they involve the community in a variety of ways. Here are some ideas for how students working with teachers and parents can help their community go back to school:

- **Make personal, artistic invitations** to parents, community leaders, city officials, local reporters, and others, asking them to participate in an event or partnership.
- **Design and conduct a survey**. Students in a math class or summer program can poll fellow students, parents, teachers, or community members on a topic of interest, such as community demographics (for example, what percentage of the community attended college), opinions about the schools, or volunteerism. Find out what percentage of the community would be willing to pitch in to help, for example, as reading tutors, hosts of a work-study site, mentors of middle school students in math, or assistants in an after-school program. Release the results at a press conference or try to interest the news media in doing an article.
- **Sponsor a poster or poetry contest** with an *America Goes Back to School* theme. Invite local writers and artists to judge. Display the artwork in public areas, such as storefronts and school hallways. Use the art and poetry in a school-community calendar.



- **Write and give speeches** on the importance of one of the five key areas in education. (See the separate information in this folder for facts and examples around each of the five areas.) Selected students might give their speeches at a public event, a press conference, or at meetings of local organizations and civics groups.
- **Debate** a current education issue in your community. Invite community leaders to listen to the debate and then participate. Videotape the debate for playback on your cable access channel.
- **Write articles** for the school newspaper and local newspaper on *America Goes Back to School* activities. Write letters to the editor about the importance of education. Journalists can help students learn how to write a good article.
- **Create a public service announcement** on the event or partnership. Students can write the script, enlist peers to act or read, and produce the PSA. Ask your cable TV access channel or local TV or radio station to help with the production.
- **Be a student pal**. Start a "student pal" group or a welcome committee at your school. Students can be ambassadors to new students and their families by showing them around the school, answering questions and concerns, and being a friendly face in the crowd.
- **Perform at an event.** Any student performance group—drama club, band, orchestra, cheerleaders, dance troupe—can perform at an *America Goes Back to School* event. Performance groups can also be part of a parade or rally that recognizes students for academic achievement. Make sure your parade has a truckload of honor roll students!
- **Organize an "academic olympics."** With the help of community volunteers, high school students could sponsor an event at which students from different elementary schools compete together in spelling bees, real-life math problems, science experiments, and other learning activities. Highlight outstanding students through the President's Education Awards Program. Contact the principal's office at your local school for more information.
- **Make plans for the millennium**. Brainstorm ways that students can help the community celebrate the coming of the new century. Choose some projects to work on throughout the year that celebrate the past and imagine the future.

Make It Public: Creating a Public Engagement Plan

Publicity is key. How else will the community find out about your event and partnership? The following pages provide a guide to working with local and state officials and with the media.[4] Recruit volunteers who have experience with both to help you navigate.

Make It Official

Involve local and state officials in your *America Goes Back to School* event and partnership. Their support and recognition will increase the visibility and the strength of your event and partnership. Here is some information to help you obtain a proclamation or a resolution for *America Goes Back to School* at the state, city, and school board level.

Local Proclamations

Ask a local official to issue an *America Goes Back to School* proclamation declaring an *America Goes Back to School* month, week, or day in your city or community. Draft a proclamation and send it with a cover letter explaining the significance of *America Goes Back to School*. Indicate your interest in meeting with the official and make an appointment. For the signing, work with the official's staff to alert media. Arrange to have a photographer at the signing and distribute the photo to local papers. Be sure to display your proclamation at *America Goes Back to School* events and reproduce it in newsletters and programs.

State Resolutions

Ask your state superintendent of schools, state legislature, state representative, or governor to endorse *America Goes Back to School* events by passing a resolution recognizing the importance of developing partnerships among families, schools, communities, and employers to help children learn.

See the following sample proclamations from last year's *America Goes Back to School* effort, including a proclamation by the president of the United States, as examples.

[4] Adapted from the Music Education National Conference, the National Middle-level Education Month Kit produced by the National Association for Secondary School Principals and the National Middle School Association, organizing information for the National African American Parent Involvement Day, and the Corporation for National Service publication, A Guide to Working With the Media.

Please feel free to quote from any part of the following proclamations.

PROCLAMATION

A Proclamation by the President of the United States, September 8, 1997

Americans want the best for our children. We want them to live out their dreams, empowered with the tools they need to make the most of their lives and to build a future where America remains the world's beacon of hope and freedom and opportunity. To do this, we must all make improving the quality of education in America one of our highest priorities.

In my State of the Union Address earlier this year, I issued a call to action for American education to prepare our Nation for the 21st century. Working together, we must make our schools strong and safe, with clear standards of achievement and discipline and talented, dedicated teachers in every classroom. Every school and every State should adopt rigorous national standards, with national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade math to make sure our children master the basics. We must ensure that every student can read independently and well by the end of the 3rd grade. We must connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and help all students become technologically literate. We must modernize school buildings and expand school choice and accountability in public education. And we must encourage lifelong learning for all our citizens, from expanding Head Start programs to helping adults improve their education and skills.

These goals are ambitious, but they are crucial if we are to prepare for the challenges and possibilities of life in the 21st century. With the 1997 balanced budget agreement, we will begin to meet these goals by providing new resources to help children learn to read, the means to help connect every school to the Internet, and tens of billions of dollars in tax cuts to help families pay for college.

I urge all Americans to become actively involved in their local schools and colleges and to make a real commitment to support education improvement and give our children the kind of support they need to succeed. The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education is setting a powerful example in this endeavor. These partners—including the Department of Education and more than 3,000 schools, families, colleges and universities, community, cultural, and religious groups, businesses, elected officials and policymakers, and the men and women of our Armed Forces—have pledged their support for our initiative, "America Goes Back to School: Answering the President's Call to Action." Through their dedication to our children, they are helping America's young people grow into responsible and productive citizens. They are proving that when communities unite, every student can achieve.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 8 through September 14, 1997, as a time when America Goes Back to School. I encourage parents, schools, community and State leaders, businesses, civic and religious organizations, and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and meaningful involvement in schools and colleges and the students and families they serve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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PROCLAMATION

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

by His Excellency GOVERNOR WILLIAM F. WELD, 1996

WHEREAS: Family and community involvement in the education of young people enhances their ability to learn and develop; and

WHEREAS: The United States Department of Education and the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education are sponsoring *America Goes Back to School*, a nationwide campaign to encourage family and community involvement in learning; and

WHEREAS: It is appropriate that all Massachusetts citizens support local schools and encourage young people in their academic endeavors;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM F. WELD, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim the week of September 8th through 14th, 1996, to be AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL: GET INVOLVED! WEEK and urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, the thirtieth day of July, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and twenty-first.

By His Excellency the Governor

WILLIAM F. WELD

PROCLAMATION

City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco is proud to join with the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the U.S. Department of Education in the nationwide back-to-school activity, *America Goes Back to School*; and

WHEREAS, currently entering its third year, the *America Goes Back to School* initiative encourages families, schools, colleges, state and local officials, civic, cultural and religious groups, and employers to come together and improve the quality of schools; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has developed certain priorities to be the focus of the 1997 back-to-school efforts including insuring the ability of students in reading independently and well by third grade, helping students master challenging mathematics, including foundation of algebra and geometry by the end of the eighth grade; and

WHEREAS, some of the goals of *America Goes Back to School* also include preparing students financially and academically for college, connecting every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000, and to ensure that every school is strong, safe, drug free, and disciplined; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Willie L. Brown Jr., mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, recognize and appreciate the invaluable contributions and vital services of the *America Goes Back to School* initiative and wish success in its 1997 endeavors nationwide and do hereby declare the month of **September** as

"AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL" MONTH in San Francisco

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.

Mayor

Make It Big

Along with local and state officials, local celebrities can also help increase the visibility of your event and partnership. Enlist the support of area sports teams, newscasters, artists and authors, business CEOs, religious leaders, a local university president, the school superintendent, and others in your community with wide name recognition. They can help by participating in *America Goes Back to School* events; by mentioning your event and partnership when speaking to groups and to the press; by wearing any promotional merchandise you may design, such as a t-shirt or button; and by lending their name as an official sponsor of your event and partnership. Use quotes from your celebrities in flyers, articles or speeches. Approach the celebrity or the celebrity's assistant with a pitch for why he or she would want to get involved and how they could be an important part of your event or partnership. Local celebrities are often very interested in helping their local communities and may be flattered by the request. It's a WIN-WIN situation for everyone.

"This is a time when all of us have to focus on what we best can do in our own homes and families, as well as in our larger society, to ensure that each child has a chance to live up to his or her promise."

—First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Make It Known

Public engagement is one way of letting your audience know about your *America Goes Back to School* event and partnership, what its purpose is, who's involved, and how others can get involved. The media can take your message to thousands of people at once.

Getting your story out through the media can help you:

Recruit participants, volunteers, and audiences;

Educate the public about the event and partnership; and

Highlight what's happening in your community in support of children's learning.

Effective relations with the media can greatly enhance the impact of your event and partnership. Reaching the news media starts with doing some homework and planning a strategy. When making decisions about media outreach, remember that you've got a lot of newsworthy competition. Several characteristics make information newsworthy. Reporters and editors respond best to **timely** news stories and ideas that include:

Local interest. You always have a better chance of making the news if your story is based in the community, centered on a local activity or individual.

Widespread appeal. People respond to stories that involve a topic currently in the news, such as getting ready to go back to school, or a common human characteristic (for example, courage or triumph over adversity) shown in a new way.

A local angle to a national story. State and local reporters like using a "hook" to illustrate the significance of a national story to their audience. Your hook would be the connection of your event and partnership to the national *America Goes Back to School* initiative and the thousands of other events and partnerships happening all across the country.

When planning events and activities, consider the most appealing way to present them to reporters. Think about developing a succinct message or "pitch"—a few words that will convince the media that your story is important and newsworthy. Press coverage could begin with the appointment of the *America Goes Back to School* chairperson or the signing of a mayoral proclamation and continue with a series of news releases describing various events. See the "ABCs of America Goes Back to School" for more ideas about potential events.

"Give your community and its children a valuable gift—your time and talents. By supporting your school through the gift of yourself and your resources, you strengthen your community, lead by example and send a strong message to children that their educational success is important."

— Tipper Gore,
family/child advocate

Make Contact

In working with the media, remember that every editor, reporter, and producer is a professional whose primary task is to present important and interesting information to the public. Your material should be relevant, timely, and interesting. Prove that you are a reliable source of information for your partnership. If a member of your group has a personal contact with the media, use it!

Public Information Outlets

Billboards and Banners

Businesses and community organizations can help publicize your events by sponsoring a billboard, hanging a banner, or posting a flier. Bank and hotel lobbies, restaurants, store windows and bulletin boards, electronic billboards at ball games, libraries, community centers, doctors' offices (especially the orthodontist!), local YMCAs and YWCAs—any place that the public visits regularly—make great places for advertising your events and partnership.

Newspapers

Newspapers provide in-depth coverage of stories, and they include regular news and features, editorials, commentaries, letters to the editor, investigative reports, and opinion columns. Think about how you can get your message across in each of these different sections. Print reporters spend a great deal of time learning about and explaining complex issues. They appreciate all the documentation, facts, and figures you can provide. In addition to daily newspapers, don't forget weekly newspapers, which are a major source of information for people outside of metropolitan areas, and college newspapers.

Magazines

Stories of interest to magazines include profiles of interesting people, trends, or exceptional performance in some area. Articles in special interest publications, or in trade and professional journals, reach specific, key audiences that can be important to your partnership and event. When approaching such publications, you should tailor each story to the specific audience. Remember that most magazines work with a lead time of several months.

Television

Television provides several opportunities for airing your message: feature segments, public service announcements, local news programs, public affairs programs, talk shows, editorial comment, and local cable television shows and public access TV. Your message for television must be short and simple. Television segments and public service announcements usually last 30 to 60 seconds. The assignment editor in a TV news department generally assigns reporters to

cover stories one day in advance. Inform the assignment editor and reporters of scheduled events in advance with a media advisory and follow-up call. Be sure to tape an on-air piece on your VCR, so you'll have a copy handy to share with others.

Radio

Most radio stations tailor their programming to a very specific audience (for example, older adults or minorities), so you'll want to tailor your message accordingly. See the section on public service announcements for more information about how to use the radio to get your message out. Radio stations usually need at least two weeks notice to air an announcement. Talk radio is also a great way to let people know about your event and partnership.

Public Information Materials and Activities

Fact Sheets

One of the first things you will want to do is create a simple, easy-to-read one-page summary of your event and partnership. As you generate interest, you'll need something handy to pass out with general information on the project and, more importantly, contact information. Use a "who, what, when, where, why, and how" format. Include a contact name, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail and Web addresses if possible. Pass the fact sheet out at meetings, send it home with students, use it in mailings, post it on bulletin boards. Distribute flyers at churches, community centers, hair salons, doctors' offices—anywhere people come together. The fact sheet is your first and easiest publicity tool. See the following general fact sheet on *America Goes Back to School* for information to use when writing about your local event.

Sample Fact Sheet

America Goes Back To School encourages parents, grandparents, community leaders, employers and employees, members of the arts community, religious leaders, and every caring adult and young person to take a more active role in improving education in their communities.

Thirty years of research show that when children can count on their family and community, in addition to their teachers, for involvement in their education, it makes a significant difference in their learning. A survey by *Money* magazine found that the factor determining the best school districts in the country was the amount of support received from parents and the community. *America Goes Back to School* focuses attention on improving education across America during the back-to-school period of August through October.

With the support of the U.S. Department of Education and members of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, thousands of *America Goes Back to School* events have taken place across the nation, in every state, since the effort began in 1995. Along with U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, past co-chairs include Tipper Gore, Michael Keaton, Bo Jackson, presidents of the National PTA, and former elected officials.

Who Can Get Involved?

YOU CAN ! Families, schools, colleges and universities, employers, and community, cultural, and religious organizations–any caring adult or young person–everyone has something to offer, something to share, and something to gain by participating in *America Goes Back to School.*

What Can You Do to Participate?

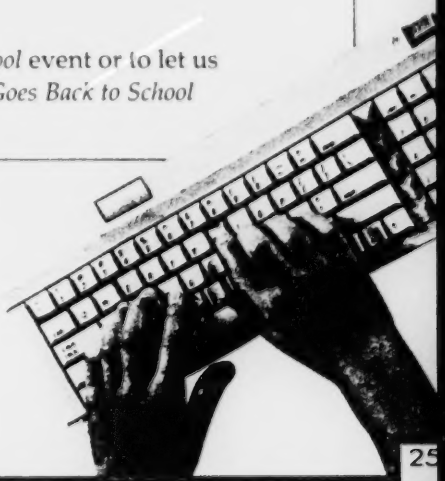
Spend time reading to a child. Educate students to prevent substance abuse. Recruit and organize tutors. Mentor a child in math. Help start or expand an after-school program. Sponsor career days and internships at work sites. Plan an event that connects middle and high school students with colleges. Volunteer your time to assist teachers. Use your own talents and resources to get involved!

When Does *America Goes Back to School* Take Place?

All Year Long! Our focus is on the back-to-school months of August through October, when people make or renew their year-long commitments to get involved.

How Do You Get Involved?

To find out more information about hosting an *America Goes Back to School* event or to let us know what you are doing, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit the *America Goes Back to School* Web site at **www.ed.gov/Family/agbts**.



Press Releases

A press release is a succinct account of your story (usually one page) and should be written as a news article. You can use a press release to publicize an event or your partnership, announce an upcoming activity, or report news relevant to your event and partnership. Newspaper editors often use portions of press releases in their stories. See the following example of an *America Goes Back to School* press release. Have a colleague read over the press release to make sure you included all the important details and to catch any spelling or grammatical errors.

Guidelines for writing a press release

Type the release, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on one side of 8-1/2 x 11" paper.

In the top left-hand corner, type "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE."

In the top right-hand corner, list the name, title, address, and telephone number(s) of the contact person.

Center the headline above the body of the release. Keep the headline short and concise and type it in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS**.

Begin the main body of the release with a dateline (city of origin and date) in all capital letters.

Include who, what, when, where, and why in the first two paragraphs. Use short paragraphs.

Limit the release to one page if possible. If not, type "MORE" at the bottom of the first page. On page two in the upper left-hand corner, type a short derivative of the main title in all capital letters.

End the release by typing "###" or "-30-" in the center of the bottom of the last page.

Attach a personal note on the release to grab the reader's attention.

Always check your spelling!

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Name, Chairperson
America Goes Back to School Month
Address/Phone Number

AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL!

ANYWHERE U.S.A., August 1998. August 1998 marks the fourth annual national celebration of *America Goes Back to School*. *America Goes Back to School* focuses public attention on education during the back-to-school months of August through October. Communities all across America are getting everyone involved in making education better for children. This year's challenge to families and all caring Americans is to get involved and stay involved through a year-round commitment to children's learning.

Each year U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley chairs this celebration. Past co-chairs include Tipper Gore, Michael Keaton, Bo Jackson, and past presidents of the National PTA. This year's co-chairs (to be announced) will be joined by parents, educators, and the thousands of family, school, education, business, community and religious members of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education in helping America go back to school.

(Chairperson's name), member of the (state or local association), is coordinating the *America Goes Back to School* celebration in (school and community name). During *America Goes Back to School*, (organization name) will promote family and community involvement in education by (list of activities). Everyone is invited to volunteer in a school, to tutor kids in reading or math, to share personal talents or experiences through a guest lecture or activity, to provide a workplace internship to a student, or to help with a school or college fundraiser. Some of the planned events are (list of proposed activities with dates, times, locations, and contact person's names and phone number).

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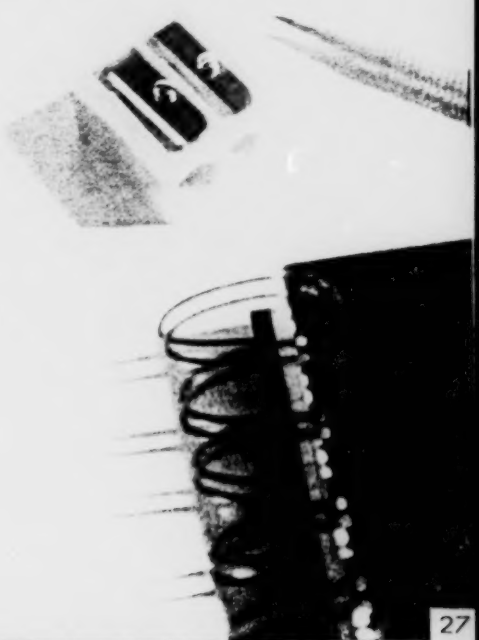

Media Advisory

A media or press advisory is an alert to the media about an upcoming event (for example, a press conference, awards ceremony, or parade). A media advisory is written in the style of a press release but is much shorter and to the point. The headings who, what, when, where and why are commonly used to organize the information and make it stand out. Advisories should be faxed to reporters about three to five days before an event and followed up with a call to confirm reporters' attendance or to offer additional information. Be sure to include detailed information on where the event is to be held, including directions if necessary.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor offer a ready vehicle for discussing an education issue, for example, the value of setting high standards in the school curriculum. Summon all your persuasive powers, but be precise and get to your point without wasting words—one typed page is usually enough. Sign your letter and include your address and telephone number. Your personal information will not be published but may be used for verification by the editor. It may seem obvious, but remember to address your letter to "Letters to the Editor." See the following sample of a letter to the editor.

I support the United States Department of Education's effort, *America Goes Back to School*. I encourage all parents to get involved with their children's education.

Cal Ripken Jr.
Baltimore Orioles
Major League Baseball

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

As the students of __(your local community)__ head back to school, we all need to think about what each of us can do to help them receive a high-quality education. The students of today are the people who are going to be working in our community, taking care of us, and leading our country in the future. We all have an interest in making sure that they become as well educated and well prepared as possible.

The back-to-school time is an excellent time for people to get involved in education. Everyone can contribute something—parents and families, grandparents and senior citizens, members of community and cultural organizations, employers and employees. Every caring adult, and even older students, can play a role in improving education.

(Add a paragraph about your event and let people know how they can get involved.)

I encourage everyone to contact a local school and ask what you can do to help. Find an organization or a project already working with students and get involved. Do something now, because better education is everybody's business!

Sincerely,

(Your name, title and address)

Photographs

Photos generally fall into two classes: news photos and feature photos. News pictures may tell a story themselves while feature photos may supplement newspaper stories about events, individuals, or activities such as concerts, parades, and workshops. Newspapers prefer to receive pictures with news stories.

In submitting photos, remember:

Most newspapers prefer 5" x 7" black-and-white, glossy photos with borders.

Color photos and Polaroid shots are not acceptable.

Pictures should be in sharp focus with good contrast between black and white.

A single point of interest is essential. Eliminate unnecessary details.

Captions should clearly explain picture content. Tell who is doing what, when, and where. Be sure to mention *America Goes Back to School* and your school's name. Tape the caption to the back of the picture, so that it falls just below the photo for easy reading. Do not write on the back of the picture; this may damage it.

Both vertical and horizontal shots should be submitted. The variety will produce a more attractive layout.

A piece of cardboard needs to be included with each photo for protection. If the photo becomes bent, creased, or marred, it will not be usable. Write "PHOTO ENCLOSED—DO NOT BEND" on the outside of the envelope.

Negatives ought to be saved since photos are rarely returned.

"What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child that must the community want for all of its children."

— John Dewey,
American educator

Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSAs) are short messages that radio and television stations air free of charge on behalf of the public interest. Many radio stations are happy to run PSAs for school events. In addition, some TV stations air a community bulletin board of events. Some will even help you produce the PSA. The key is to contact the public service directors of your radio and TV stations early to see what arrangements can be made. Usually, stations need at least two weeks notice to run an existing PSA.

When writing a PSA, remember that broadcast copy is written and designed for the ear. Keep in mind that broadcast copy should:

Sound personal and have a sense of immediacy;

Be clear, concise, conversational, and correct;

Use the active voice and present tense whenever possible;

Use contractions just as you would if talking; and

Tell listeners (viewers) how to get more information.

Determine which stations serve your community, contact their public service director, explain what *America Goes Back to School* is and the importance of family and community involvement in the five critical areas in education, describe your PSA script, and ask whether the station would be willing to air the spot.

Here are some sample PSAs for radio stations or a TV bulletin board. They are designed to alert people to *America Goes Back to School* and to encourage families and community members to contact their local schools for more information.

Be sure to fit your message in the time slot allotted.

10 seconds—about 25 words

30 seconds—about 75 words

60 seconds—about 150 words

Sample Public Service Announcements

(approximately 60 seconds each)

Announcer:
What can make a difference in children's learning? You can.

Do you sing in the shower? Help children enjoy music in an after-school program. Go see the marching band's half-time show.

Do you surf the Internet? Help students and teachers learn how to use the Internet to find useful information.

Have you ever read a book? Share a book with a child through a reading tutoring program.

Do you take out the trash? Volunteer to help keep the school building and school grounds clean, safe, and attractive.

Make improving education a part of your daily routine. Whatever your skills, talents, and experiences, you can help support children's learning. Call your local school to find out how you can help. C'mon America . . . let's go back to school!

Announcer:
Picture that special child in your life. Are you a parent? Grandparent? Aunt or uncle? Brother or sister? Family friend? Babysitter? Neighbor?

Then you know what makes a difference in children's learning. YOU DO.

But did you know that the three most influential factors in student achievement are:

The student's attendance at school;

The availability of books, newspapers, and magazines in the home; and

The amount of television the student watches.

These are all things over which families have some control. Family and community involvement makes a real difference in children's learning. Contact your local school to find out what you can do to help children learn. C'mon America . . . let's go back to school!

"Investing in education pays handsome dividends for everyone. Our children are an asset, not a liability, to America."

— Hugh Price
President, National Urban League

Announcer:
Those students you see on your way to work every morning. Waiting for the school bus. Walking to school. Riding their bikes. Waiting at the stoplight next to you. One of them might teach your grandchildren or your grandchildren's children someday. One of them might patrol your neighborhood at night. One might write the sports column in the newspaper. One of them might work for you. You might even vote for one of those kids someday for mayor or senator or president.

We don't know yet what's ahead for these students and for ourselves. Help make sure that today's students are prepared for tomorrow's world. Contact your local school to find out how you can help. Or call the Education Excellence Partnership at 1-800-382-3762 for a copy of their booklet on standards. C'mon America . . . let's go back to school!

Press Conferences

Press conferences should be held only if you have major news to announce. A press conference would be appropriate for:

- The announcement of the chairperson and steering committee of your *America Goes Back to School* event;
- The signing of a proclamation by the mayor or a school board resolution;
- The launch of a new year-round partnership or activity through *America Goes Back to School*; or
- The release of survey results or a new study on education in your community, perhaps around one of the five key areas in education.

Here are some tips for running a press conference. *Many of these tips are relevant to media events in general.*

- Notify the press at least one day before the event.
- Follow-up with phone calls to reporters.
- Limit the press conference to a half hour.
- Select a convenient and relevant location with adequate room (choose a rain site if outdoors).
- Make sure there are plenty of electrical outlets for reporters' equipment.
- Provide a lectern with microphones.
- Display your *America Goes Back to School* logo where cameras will pick it up.
- Plan a minute-by-minute logistics sheet with speaking order, arrival and departure times of special guests, and last-minute details.
- Reserve the front section for media. Provide chairs for reporters, name cards for speakers, and an easel for colorful visual aids, such as charts and graphs.
- Make a press kit available with background materials on the speakers, the event, and the partnership (see "Press Kit" below).
- Provide a media sign-in sheet so you can follow up with reporters who attend. Be sure to ask for phone and fax numbers.
- Conduct a question-and-answer session at the end .
- Prepare talking points for the speakers.
- Select one person to greet the press and help with any requests.
- Take plenty of photographs and record the press conference if possible on audio or videotape.
- Ask the most well-known speakers to be available for interviews with the press and help reporters set up interviews.

Press Kit

A press kit is a set of materials that provides the information a reporter needs to write an accurate article. Press kits can be sent anytime to reporters; however, they should always be on hand at press conferences and other special events. Among the materials you may wish to include are press releases, fact sheets, partnership brochures, an agenda for an event or press conference, biographical sketches of speakers or participants, photos of speakers or participants, a copy of your latest newsletter, any other important program information, including details of upcoming *America Goes Back to School* events, and your contact information.

Activities Calendar

Most papers print an activities calendar regularly. Many people in your community use it as a quick reference for things to do in their free time. Find out deadlines and the person in charge of the calendar so you can gain the widest publicity for *America Goes Back to School* and related events.

Banners, Posters, and Fliers

Ask a local graphic design or printing firm to donate services and materials to create banners, posters, and fliers to post around your community. Or ask children in a local summer program to design and create unique, one-of-a-kind advertisements for your events and partnership.

The Web

Think about setting up a Web page for your event or partnership. Approach a local Internet/computer group about developing and hosting a Web site for you. Then ask local businesses, community organizations, and schools to link to the Web site from their own sites. For businesspeople and home computer users, the Web is a convenient way to get information about your event and partnership. For ideas, take a look at the U.S. Department of Education's *America Goes Back to School* Web site at **www.ed.gov/Family/agbts**. Ask your local Web service provider to link their Web page to your site during the week or month of your event. This could help attract people to your Web site who might not otherwise know about your event.

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Stay Connected—U.S. Department of Education Resources

Link Up With Other Outreach Activities!

Almost every community has something exciting to share with others. Almost every community has a local partnership starting to work on important issues and facing new challenges in education. A network of parents, concerned citizens, educators, business and community leaders are working to move education forward across America. Be part of the network by tuning in to the monthly Satellite Town Meeting and by joining the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. Newsletters and mailings, special conferences and downlink opportunities will keep you and your efforts connected. See the following pages for more information about both of these exciting ways to connect your partnership nationally!

Satellite Town Meeting

Here's your chance to join an exciting conversation with people who are doing what it takes to improve American education...

Across the country, partnerships of concerned citizens—parents, teachers, college leaders, child-care providers, businesspeople, community leaders, and others—have come together to improve their local schools and help children learn more. One way these hundreds of communities are sharing ideas and keeping up-to-date with the latest information is through a unique service from the U.S. Department of Education: the *Satellite Town Meeting*.

On the third Tuesday of each month during the school year, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley hosts the *Satellite Town Meeting*, a free, live, interactive teleconference about community efforts to improve teaching and learning. This is your opportunity to ask a question of Secretary Riley and his guests—drawn from communities like yours—on what works in schools and communities. Topics will address the most critical issues in education, including: raising student achievement, using technology in classrooms, making college more accessible, reducing class size, renovating and constructing schools, encouraging families, schools and communities to work together and creating partnerships to help children read.

Your community can join the *Satellite Town Meeting* as easy as A, B, C!

Arrange for a site with satellite capability.

Bring together people committed to education: including parents, teachers, business people, community leaders and others; and.

Call your local cable operator to broadcast the program throughout your community.

Join the discussion! The *Satellite Town Meeting* is available at **no cost.** We just ask that you register your participation.

For the satellite coordinates, ideas on organizing your community, a registration form, and other materials, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327). Our information specialists can answer your questions on how to create your own local meeting in coordination with the *Satellite Town Meeting*.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.ED.GOV/INITS/STM

Plan your back-to-school events around this special Satellite Town Meeting to kick-off *America Goes Back To School!*

Tuesday, September 15, 1998
8:00-9:00 p.m.
Eastern time

"America Goes Back to School!"

The Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

"Better Education Is Everybody's Business"

–U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

The Partnership's Mission

- To increase opportunities for families to be more involved in their children's learning at school and at home.
- To use family-school-community partnerships to strengthen schools and improve student achievement.

–U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Our Partners. Thousands of partners pledge their support for student learning to high standards through this growing grassroots movement. Partners belong to one of four groups: Family-School Partners, Employers for Learning, Community Organizations, and Religious Groups.

Together, partners support efforts to:

- Strengthen family-school partnerships through good communication and mutual responsibility for children's learning;
- Adopt family- and student-friendly business practices;
- Provide before- and after-school learning activities for children;
- Make effective use of facilities–schools, community buildings, churches–for children and families; and
- Give parents the resources, training, and information they need to help children learn, and teachers and principals the tools they need to engage families.

The benefits of joining include:

- Connecting with other groups to share and learn from one another;
- Working together to strengthen and improve efforts to help children learn;
- Keeping up with the latest information and activities nationwide; and
- Receiving recognition for visible commitments at the local, state, and national levels.

America Goes Back to School activity idea: Use the Partnership as a way to bring your community together! Convene members of your school community to talk about what joining the Partnership means to you locally. Then hold an event highlighting schools, community and religious organizations, and businesses signing onto the Partnership.

Activities of the Partnership. In addition to numerous local activities, Partnership members are involved in nationwide activities such as the following:

READ*WRITE*NOW! As part of the America Reads Challenge, this activity focuses on reading during the summer months. Participating children read and write for thirty minutes every day, and teenagers and adults share a love of reading by being reading partners to young children.

America Goes Back to School. During the months of August through October, join Americans across the country as they go back to school to share their talents and experiences. Make a year-long commitment, starting in the fall, to help improve education and to help students learn.

Think College Early. Help increase awareness and support for middle and high school students to take the courses needed to enter college and to be prepared financially through this new initiative.

Priority on After-School Extended Learning. Partner members have placed new emphasis on the importance of providing before- and after-school activities that extend learning for children in a safe, drug-free environment.

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Family-School Partnership Promise

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

Families and schools across America increasingly are accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. When families are involved in children's learning, at school and at home, schools work better and students learn more. Schools and families are working with employers and community organizations to develop local partnerships that support a safe school environment where students learn to challenging standards. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision making, and collaborating for children's learning, everyone can contribute to the education process.

Coming together as families, local school board governance, administration, teachers and school staff, we form this partnership and affirm the importance of family involvement in children's learning.

We pledge to:

- **Share responsibility** at school and at home to give students a better education and a good start in life.
- **Help schools** to welcome families; to reach out to families before problems arise; to offer challenging courses; to create safe and drug-free learning environments; to organize tutoring and other opportunities that improve student learning; and to support the inclusion of families in the school decision-making process.
- **Help families** to monitor student attendance, homework completion and television watching; to take the time to talk with and listen to their children; to become acquainted with teachers, administrators and school staff; to read with younger children and share a good book with a teen; to volunteer in school when possible; and to participate in the school decision-making process.
- **Promote effective, two-way communication** between families and schools by schools reducing educational jargon and breaking down cultural and language barriers and by families staying in touch with the school.
- **Provide opportunities for families** to learn how to help their children succeed in school and opportunities for school staff to work with families.
- **Support family-school efforts to improve student learning** by reviewing progress regularly and strengthening cooperative actions.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (*Please type or print the following information.*)

School Name _____

School Address _____

_____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

School Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Principal _____ Signature _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____ Phone _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Family-School Partnership Promise certificate.**

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

The Community Promise

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

A strong and vigorous community, one that is supportive of all citizens, depends upon an educated, skilled, competent and involved citizenry. Schools, families, and community organizations increasingly are accepting mutual responsibility for children's learning. By working together, exchanging information, sharing decision-making, and collaborating for children's learning, everyone can contribute to the educational process. As a community-based organization, we support family-school compacts and affirm the importance of family and community involvement in student learning.

We commit to involve our organization and its community members in a family-school-community partnership. By coming together with other organizations, we will:

- Make safe schools/safe neighborhoods a priority.
- Combat alcohol, drugs, and violence in and around schools and neighborhoods.
- Reinforce parenting skills by using community institutions to provide family and literacy training and referral services.
- Provide mentoring and homework help programs so that children may be assured of tutoring and guidance from knowledgeable and responsible adults.
- Come together to coordinate delivery of services and to eliminate duplication of efforts.
- Help to develop and sponsor affordable and quality after-school, weekend and summer learning, cultural, and community recreational activities.
- Support school improvement efforts in the local community.
- Support and become informed about school governance issues.
- Encourage schools to be involved in the life of the community through co-sponsorship of community outreach activities of partner organizations.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit our community organization to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. *(Please type or print the following information.)*

Community Group _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Official _____ Signature _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Community Promise certificate.**

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

The Employer Promise

PARTNERSHIP for Family Involvement in Education

A strong and vigorous economy, for our employers and our nation, depends upon an educated, skilled, and competent citizenry. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens as well as our long-term investments for the future. Employers play an important role in the school improvement efforts at the local, state, and national levels. We now can multiply the effectiveness of such efforts by enlisting our current employees as partners in the campaign to support and better the American educational system. Any company, regardless of its size, can take steps to support parents in its workforce and to support local education. Over 30 years of research shows that greater family and adult involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving a high-quality education.

Small investments that enable employee participation in students' academic success, and in our education system, lead to a win/win for everyone:

- Employers Win by helping prepare a highly skilled and globally competitive workforce.
- Employees Win by making positive differences in children's education and in their local schools.
- Schools Win from increased parental and community involvement.
- Students Win from better education.

We recognize there are many ways to get started:

- Contact a local school to discuss opportunities for cooperation.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help children learn.
- Explore with employees ways in which they can help local schools better educate their students.
- Explore policies and practices to encourage and enable employee involvement in schools and learning.
- Contact the Partnership for Family Involvement in education for information.

We commit to:

- Identify a contact person, authorized to explore and develop options for company involvement in our family-school-community initiatives.
- Take action to implement programs.
- Share best practices after evaluation programs annually.
- Form partnerships with other stakeholders to promote, implement, and improve family-friendly policies and practices.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. *(Please type or print the following information.)*

Company/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

President/CEO _____ Signature _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____ Phone _____

Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Employers for Learning Promise certificate.**

PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education

Join the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

Statement of Common Purpose Among Religious Communities Supporting Family Involvement in Learning

"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray" Proverbs 22:6

As members of religious communities from across the land, we join to affirm the vital and enduring role of families in the education of children. We have always regarded families—and parents in particular—as the primary teachers of children. Encouraged by Secretary of Education Richard Riley's concern for all children and his commitment to the role of families in educating children, we call upon all people of good will to stand as one with us in support of families' participation in children's learning.

Parents and guardians need to immerse themselves in the education of their children as never before. Children need the immediate and constant support of their families. But there are other voices at odds with these goals: the voices of poverty, loneliness, and fear. Because of this, there are children who do not attend school regularly, whose test scores and grades falter, who have too much idle time, and whose parents are absent, too overwhelmed or too busy to spend time reading, talking, praying, playing, listening, helping or encouraging them.

Religious communities hear this cry. It is with this knowledge and in our unique roles that we stand united in our commitment to the involvement of family members in the education of children. We believe the participation of family members in the education and spiritual development of young people is fundamental to a child's preparation for adulthood and the responsibilities of citizenship. Our nation's future depends upon a shared concern for the education of young people.

It is imperative that religious communities join together with governments, community organizations, businesses, and public and private schools in striving to provide families, parents, grandparents, foster parents, guardians, or extended family members with the information, skills, tools, and opportunities that will encourage their participation in the total education of their children, including character education. We are committed to working together to improve children's learning through family involvement partnerships.

We are thankful for the blessings of religious liberty, a sacred trust, stated in the Declaration of Independence and guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution, that enables the members of all faiths to work together freely and openly for the common good. As beneficiaries of this great legacy, we pledge our support in encouraging family involvement in the education of children.

We call upon all citizens, religious communities, community organizations, and businesses to do their share. We urge family members to become actively involved in their children's education, religious communities to work to better understand and meet educational and family needs, community organizations to sponsor meaningful youth- and family-oriented activities, and businesses to adopt family-friendly policies in the workplace. Governments need to promote public policies that encourage greater family involvement in the education of all children. We challenge our society to value and nurture our children of today so that they can be productive citizens of tomorrow.

We would like to become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We commit to family-friendly practices and will work with others to form partnerships that support children's learning. (Please type or print the following information.)

House of Worship/Religious Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

National Affiliation/Denomination _____ Date _____

Official _____ Signature _____

Contact Person _____ Title _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-Mail _____

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Send to: Partnership for Family Involvement in Education 600 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-8173 or fax to 202-205-9133 to receive your **Religious Communities Promise certificate.**

Tell Us About Your *America Goes Back to School* Event

Title of event: _____

Description of event and partnership*: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date and time of event: _____

Are any officials, celebrities, or VIPs participating? If so, who? _____

_____

Which of the following areas does your event focus on? *(Check all that apply)*

____ Technology
____ Reading / America Reads Challenge
____ Mastering Challenging Mathematics
____ College-going / Thinking College Early
____ Safe & Drug-Free Schools
____ Creating Dedicated, Well-prepared Teachers
____ After-school Programs / 21st Century Community Learning Centers
____ Other (please describe) _____

What is the estimated size of your event? _____50 participants ____100 participants
____ 500 participants _____ More than 500 participants (list estimated number)_____

Is your event a ____ one time activity _____ ongoing partnership?

NOTE: If you would like consideration as a showcase event site during *America Goes Back to School* 1998, please return this form to the address below NO LATER THAN AUGUST 10, 1998.

Name of your school / organization / employer / partnership: _____

_____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: ( ) _____ Fax: ( ) _____

E-mail address: _____ Web site: _____

Please return completed form to:

America Goes Back to School
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202-8173
FAX: 202-205-9133 E-mail: agbts@ed.gov

**Use additional sheets if necessary*

No information on this form will be shared without your permission.

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National African American Parent Involvement Day
National Engineers Week
National Middle School Association

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AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

U.S. Department of Education

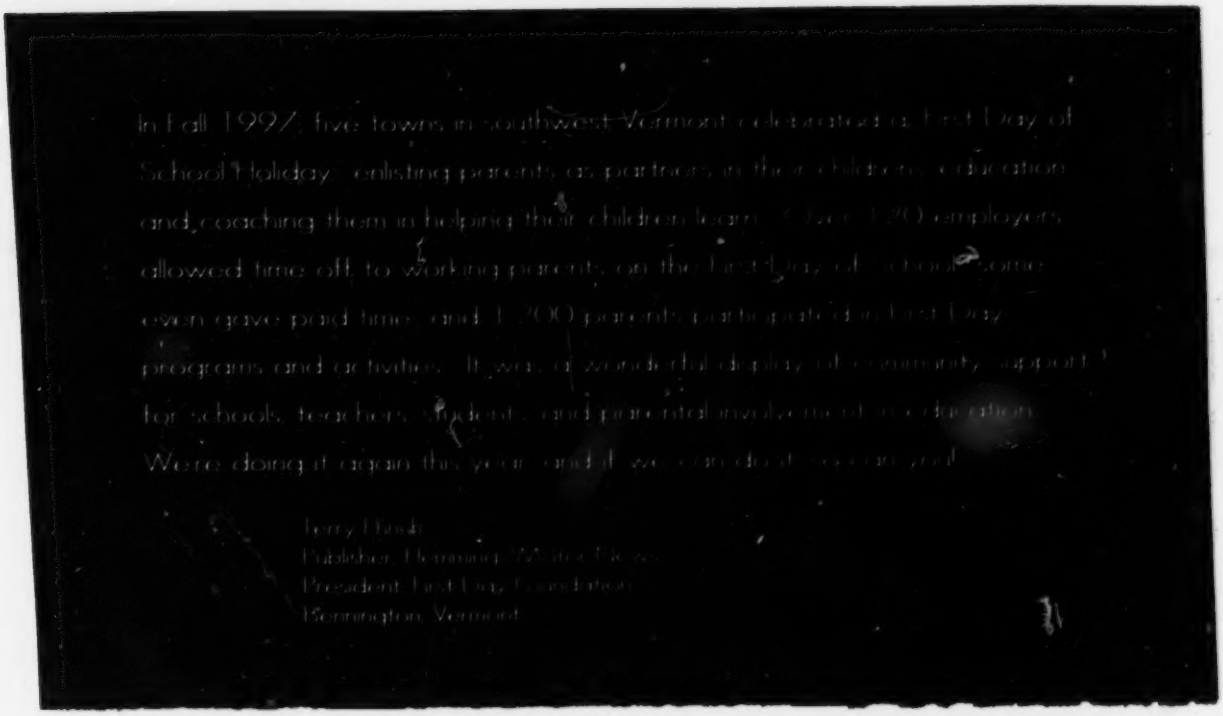
Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

600 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202-8173

E-mail: agbts@ed.gov

1-800-USA-LEARN



In Fall 199?, five towns in southwest Vermont celebrated a First Day of School Holiday - enlisting parents as partners in their children's education and coaching them in helping their children learn. Over 120 employers allowed time off to working parents on the First Day of school, some even gave paid time - and 1,200 parents participated in First Day programs and activities. It was a wonderful display of community support for schools, teachers, students and parental involvement in education. We're doing it again this year - and if we can do it so can you!

Jerry Hirsh
Publisher, Manchester Journal
President, First Day Foundation
Manchester, Vermont

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

Get Involved!
Stay Involved!

7 Good Practices for Families

Make time for your children —those moments talking during evening meals and visiting the library, museum or zoo together make a difference.

Read together. It's the starting point of all learning. Read with your youngsters 30 minutes a day. Share a good book with your teen.

Use TV wisely. Limit viewing to no more than two hours a day.

Stay in regular contact with your child's teachers and principal.

Encourage your children to take challenging courses at school. Check homework every day.

Know where your children are, especially your teens. Support after-school and summer programs. Help connect kids to service opportunities through the schools and youth leadership, community and religious groups.

Talk directly to your children about the values you want them to have and about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. And listen to them, too!

Better education is everybody's business!

For more information about research and tips on family and community involvement in education, call 1-800-USA-LEARN, or visit <www.ed.gov>.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Help our children read well and independently by the end of third grade

- Read to, and with, your children for 30 minutes every day. (Use the bookmark attached to this brochure when you read!)
- Help your children get a library card and check out books.
- Limit the amount and kind of TV your children watch.
- Keep track of your children's progress in school by regularly talking to their teachers and visiting their classrooms.

- Become a reading tutor to a child in your community.
- Volunteer in an after-school or summer reading program. Encourage business and community support for these programs.
- Develop a monthly program at your community center, school or library in which senior citizens and grandparents discuss their lives and experiences. Children can learn from these oral histories.
- Be supportive of school, community, and state efforts to meet high academic reading standards.

Help our children learn to meet high math and science standards and take challenging math and science courses

- Go over your children's mathematics homework with them.
- Meet with your children's math teachers to find out what your children are learning and how you can help.
- Do math activities with your child such as counting, measuring, estimating and solving problems.
- Insist that your child study algebra in eighth grade and more advanced math and science through high school, such as chemistry, physics, trigonometry and calculus.

- Talk with students and parents about how you use math in your work and life.
- Become a math tutor to a child in your community.
- Organize a family math night, a math or science club or a job shadowing program to support math learning outside the classroom.
- Support school, community and state efforts to set and meet high math and science standards.

Help our children start early to prepare for college and careers

- Encourage your children to take challenging courses every year in middle and high school to keep all college and career options open; enroll them in Advanced Placement and tech prep courses in their last few years of high school.
- Start saving now for college—a little bit each month helps. Learn about the Education Individual Retirement Account.
- Learn about scholarships, grants, work-study, tax credits and other options to help families pay for college. Call 1-800-4FED-AID.
- Make sure your child registers for, prepares for and takes the SAT, ACT, and any other entrance exams required by colleges.

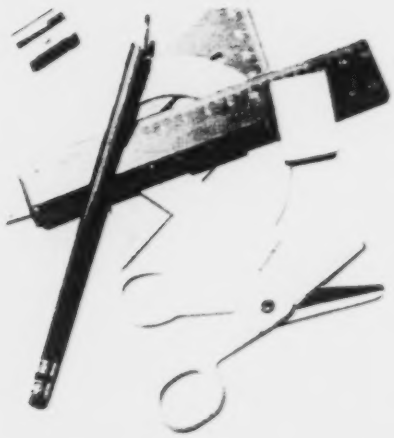
- Talk to students about your job and the education needed to be successful in a career.
- Help set up a work-study internship or school-to-career program at your workplace that would let students learn about careers even before they leave high school.
- Encourage your employer to ask to see high school and/or college transcripts before they hire new employees.
- Support local community after-school and summer programs that provide help with homework and college preparation.
- Encourage individual students regularly by helping them set life and college or career goals.

Family and community involvement is the key to better student achievement and success. Whether you have a child in school or not, helping families help their children learn is important. Use the tips in this brochure to get involved and stay involved and help children read better, enroll in challenging mathematics classes, and prepare for college.

How can you help modernize America's schools for the 21st century?

- Support efforts to renovate, modernize and construct schools. Many are overcrowded and have out-of-date classrooms.
- Support proposals to reduce class size in order to give children more individual attention.
- Assist with efforts to give students and teachers access to computers and technology in the classroom.
- Help to make schools violence- and drug-free.

Remember,
better education is
everybody's business!



- Support efforts to keep schools open after regular hours as safe havens to enhance learning through access to computers, arts, music, tutoring, supervised recreation and community service.
- Help schools to establish meaningful standards for what students should be expected to learn.

If you'd like more information on these areas or other educational topics of concern to your community, call:

U.S. Department of Education
1-800-USA-LEARN

www.ed.gov

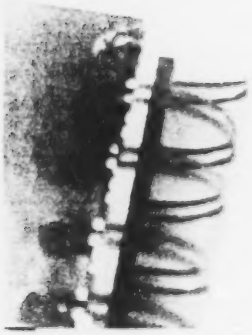
For more information, visit these Websites

READING:
www.ed.gov/inits/americareads

MATH and SCIENCE:
www.ed.gov/inits/Math

COLLEGE and CAREER:
www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early

PARTNERSHIP
for Family
Involvement
in Education



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202-8173

Five Key Areas in Education

These cards will help you focus your efforts on five key areas in education that are of frequent interest to many Americans:

- Building good citizens, good character, and good discipline
- Helping all children master the basics, including reading and math
- Helping students "think college early", both financially and academically, and prepare for careers
- Modernizing and strengthening our public schools, through efforts such as public school choice, charter schools, after-school programs, smaller class size, better use of technology, and school construction
- Growing our own school leaders to meet the increasing demand for more and highly skilled teachers and principals

Each card that follows contains information and facts on one of the five key areas. Use them as talking points in speeches and articles and to help educate your community. Also included are ideas for and examples of events and partnerships that support each of the five key areas. Back-to-school time is a great time to start, expand and kick off new partnerships.

For more information on how U.S. Department of Education programs can support your efforts in each of these areas, see the "Current, New and Proposed Resources" card.

Good luck, and remember that successful partnerships make successful schools—and strong schools make a strong community!

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Building good citizens, good character, and good discipline

To build good citizens, good character, and good discipline, we need to have high expectations and high standards for each and every student. We must teach students the skills and help them acquire the knowledge they need to contribute in an ever-changing economy and to get on the right course. For the first time since 1991, teen drug use is leveling off and, in some cases, even decreasing, but it is still far too high. We need to give young people opportunities to say "YES" to learning and "YES" to living safe and drug-free. The average child spends forty hours a week in front of the television. That's forty missed hours of reading, of playing the guitar, of sharing a hobby, of getting extra help with a hard subject in school, forty missed hours of living and learning. Let's give our children something better to do with their time!

Key Facts[1]

- Six in ten Americans say that it is very common for teenagers to face social problems like drugs, gangs, or crime. Four in ten teenagers say they see people their own age using drugs or alcohol almost every day.
- Approximately half of teenagers said they would be very comfortable doing community service such as volunteering at a hospital, church, or at a soup kitchen, working with homeless children, or tutoring kids at school.

Good Ideas

- Start a parent patrol at school or in the community. Enlist family members to help keep order at school-sponsored and community events such as sporting events, dances, and other student activities. Fathers can be especially effective in this capacity. Community members, especially businesses, can work together to help provide a safe pathway for students who walk to and from school.

Make a pledge. At the vice president's Family Reunion VI conference, Families and Learning, President Clinton challenged principals, teachers, and parents to have a written compact outlining their shared responsibilities for student learning. At Signal Hill Elementary School in Long Beach, California, parents pledge in the compact to volunteer at least ten hours a year at the school. What pledge will you make?

- Host a community learning day and volunteer summit for students, families, and the community. Participants make pledges for how they will support education throughout the year. Families can pledge to read to their children at home. Older students could pledge to help younger students with math homework. Community members can pledge to volunteer at a school. Participants would begin fulfilling their pledges that day, with various special school projects taking place all over the community.

For research citations visit www.ed.gov/Family/AGBTS.

Serve for our future. In April 1997, the Presidents' Summit for America's Future was held in Philadelphia to focus attention on the need for and the importance of community service. America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth, directed by General Colin Powell, is carrying the mission of the Summit forward. Hundreds of corporations, non-profits, government agencies, communities of faith, civic and fraternal organizations, and service clubs from all across America made commitments. For more information on America's Promise and the commitments, check out their Web site at **www.americaspromise.org** or call 1-800-365-0153.

- Focus on learning in your community's after-school programs. According to the FBI, youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are most at risk of committing violent acts and being victims of crime between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Surveys show that parents want their children to be involved in after-school learning and enrichment activities. Help students take advantage of this time in a safe and constructive manner by starting an after-school, extended learning program in your school. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a copy of *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers* to help you.

Support after-school programs. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation has pledged $55 million to help create thousands of community-based, after-school programs over the next five years. This money will support the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program by providing training, leadership development, technical assistance and evaluation. Visit **www.mott.org** for more information.

- Develop a report card on school crime and violence. One step in addressing the problems of drug use and violence is to better understand what problems affect your particular school. The Departments of Education and Justice are developing an annual national report on school safety, and you may want to develop a report for your own individual school or school district.

Resources to Help

The following publications are available free of charge from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-800-624-0100.

- Growing up Drug Free: A Parents Guide to Prevention
- Marijuana: Facts Parents Need to Know
- Manual on School Uniforms
- Manual to Combat Truancy (in English and Spanish)
- Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools: An Action Guide

Learning to read well and independently by the end of the third grade is essential for all further learning. Demonstrating an understanding of challenging mathematics—including elements of algebra and geometry—by the end of eighth grade is crucial for college preparation and productive employment. All students must gain mastery of basic skills, and it is particularly important for schools and communities to focus on helping students at risk of academic failure and limited English proficient students, who often fall behind early and find it difficult to catch up in the later grades. In today's economy almost every high school student should be taking all the core courses for college, and planning to take Advanced Placement and/or tech-prep courses their junior and senior years in high school. Getting ahead in the 21st century will require four years of math, science, and English, at least two to three years of a second language, and knowledge of the arts, geography, history, as well as computers.

Forty percent of 4th-graders in America do not read at the basic level on challenging reading assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

U.S. 4th-graders score above the international average in math, 8th-graders score below the average, and 12th-graders rank only above Cypress and South Africa.

Algebra is the "gateway" to the more advanced math and science that prepares students for college and, increasingly, for careers of all kinds. Only one in four students study algebra in the eighth grade.

Invite parents, police officers, high school and college students, businesspeople, the mayor, and any community member to bring their favorite children's book to read to a class.

Schools can join the America Reads Challenge, the President's call to action to help every child learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade, by launching or publicizing a reading tutoring program with community volunteers. Contact the financial aid administrator at your local college or university campus to find federal work-study students who could help. Building on work done over the last two years, the U.S. Department of Education has established at least one AMERICA READS CHALLENGE: READ*WRITE*NOW! pilot site in every state. These sites are forming community-based reading programs for pre-school children and/or for elementary-aged children. For more information about the pilot sites, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit **www.ed.gov/inits/americareads**.

Many parents want to help their children with homework, yet they aren't sure how. By reviewing math concepts and showing simple techniques, teachers can give parents the confidence and knowledge they need to help students with more advanced math. Later in the year, hold a math-off in which students and parents team up to solve math problems.

For research citations visit www.ed.gov/Family/AGBTS.

Get Involved! Stay Involved!

AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

In 1990, the College Board launched Equity 2000 to increase minority enrollment in college preparatory mathematics courses. In Equity 2000 districts, general math was phased out and all students are required to take advanced math courses, beginning with algebra and geometry. Extensive professional development for teachers and administrators and increased parental involvement are high priorities for the program. For more information, visit **www.collegeboard.org/equity/html/indx001.html**.

Look for ways that local arts organizations or museums could partner with your school to help promote reading and math. Have your students read a play and then go and see a local performance of it. Look for museum exhibits that use math concepts to help explain history or science.

The following publications are available free of charge, as long as copies are available, from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN or on the Internet at **www.ed.gov**.

Moving America to the Head of the Class

America Reads Challenge: READ*WRITE*NOW! Kit for Reading Partners

READY*SET*READ: An Early Childhood Kit for Parents and Caregivers

Checkpoints for Progress for Families and for Teachers

Simple Things You Can Do to Help Children Read Well and Independently

Math Equals Opportunity

Helping Your Child Get Ready for Mathematics

Helping Your Child Learn Math

The following publications are available by calling the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

Read With Me: A Guide for Student Volunteers Starting Early Childhood Programs

Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning Reading

Improving Mathematics in Middle School

Helping students "think college early" and prepare for careers

More and more jobs—particularly those involving technology—require at least some postsecondary education, making the opportunity to go to college more important than ever for American families and their children. President Clinton, Vice President Gore and Secretary Riley have worked hard to help students and families pay the costs of postsecondary education. Now we have to make sure that all students know they can go to college and that all students prepare for college by taking the right courses, starting with algebra in the eighth grade, and continuing with a full sequence of college prep courses in high school, including trigonometry, physics, chemistry and Advanced Placement, tech-prep and School-to-Work courses. Everyone who works hard can go to college!

Key Facts

- Right now in many parts of America there is a serious shortage of workers for jobs in technology.
- Fifteen years ago, the typical college graduate earned 38 percent more than a high school graduate; as of 1995, that advantage had increased to 81 percent.
- In 1995, 83 percent of high school graduates from high-income families went directly on to college, compared with 34 percent from low-income families.

Good Ideas

- Build a school-college-community partnership to improve student achievement. Colleges and universities can be a great source of assistance to help improve student achievement and to encourage students to go on to college. The University of California, Berkeley, for example, has established the Berkeley Pledge, connecting college students and faculty with elementary, middle and high schools with high numbers of minority and low-income students. The university provides one-on-one and group activities for students and training and support for teachers in such areas as reading and math.

School-community collaborative. Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams) is a school-community partnership to increase the numbers of inner-city Houston youth continuing on to college. Project GRAD is a not-for-profit organization working with 24 elementary, middle and high schools and over 17,000 children. The focus during the early grades is on reading and math, and in high school on dropout prevention and college enrollment. For more information visit **www.ncup.org**.

- Host a "Think College Early" day for middle and high school students. Invite area colleges to send representatives to talk with students. Counselors and college representatives can hold workshops for both students and their parents on how to select a school, how to apply, and what financial aid is available. Invite middle and high school alumni back to talk about the choices they made after graduating from high school—what careers they've pursued and what kind of education they needed. Take a look at the new "Think College Early" Web site at **www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/early** with information especially for middle school students and other helpful information for parents, teachers, counselors, and the community.

For research citations visit www.ed.gov/Family/AGBTS.

Career Fair. The St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools has worked with a local business advisory committee to hold an annual career fair for the last 15 years. Each year, over 12,000 youngsters will see presentations from local business people connecting what is learned in school with the world of work. Students also receive one-on-one counseling on the importance of learning math, science and technology, staying in school, and going to college.

- Launch a mentor, job shadowing, and internship program. Kicked off at the beginning of the school year, these programs can be a safety net for students having trouble in school. Starting in elementary school, a student can benefit from an adult mentor who serves as a role model and gives the student the special attention needed to develop confidence in one's own abilities. In middle school, students can participate in job shadowing, spending a day in the workplace with a mentor to see what people do in different jobs. By sharing their experiences with one another, students can learn a lot about their options for the future. At the high school level, students can gain practical workplace skills and a greater understanding of their career options through internships.

National Groundhog Job Shadow Day. On February 2, 1998, 125,000 students across the country shadowed television meteorologists, political leaders, computer programmers, doctors, and workers from hundreds of other professions in order to experience the workplace firsthand. For more information about Groundhog Job Shadow Day and starting a job shadowing program, visit **www.jobshadow.org** or call the National School-to-Work Office Learning Center at 1-800-251-7236.

Resources to Help

The following publications and additional information about financial aid for college are available free of charge from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-800-4-FEDAID.

- The Student Guide: A Resource on Student Financial Aid from the U.S. Department of Education
- Funding Your Education

For the following publications call 1-800-USA-LEARN or look on the Internet at **www.ed.gov**.

- Getting Ready for College Early: A Handbook for Parents of Students in the Middle and Junior High School Years
- Information on the HOPE Scholarship and Lifetime Learning credits
- Preparing Your Child for College (A Resource Book for Parents of High School Students)
- Think College? Me? Now? A Handbook for Middle and Junior High School Students

The following publication is available by calling the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

- Confronting the Odds: Students at Risk and the Pipeline to Higher Education

A record 52.2 million children are enrolled in our elementary and secondary schools during the 1997-98 academic year, but the more important fact is that we will break that record each year for the next ten years. We must take an active role to ensure that schools are environments in which all of these children can reach first-class academic standards. The schools and teachers facing the most difficult challenges in helping their students learn to high standards are found in America's cities. Across America, schools and communities are adopting a "no excuses" approach towards poor performance. Urban school superintendents are leading promising efforts to turn around low-performing schools.

Building and modernizing more schools to address overcrowding and reducing class size can help ensure that every student gets the individual attention he or she needs to excel. In addition, technology promises new ways of reaching and teaching all students. To prepare students for the workplace of the 21st century, we must help them learn how to use computers and other tools of the information age. Many students can benefit from schools being open after regular hours and in the summer as safe havens for learning. Community support is a key ingredient in revitalizing our public schools and in expanding them into community learning centers.

Key Facts[1]

Ninety percent of students say it is important for them to know how to use computers and up-to-date technology to get ahead in the future.

A majority of Americans support allowing the formation of charter schools and giving parents the right to choose the public school their child attends.

Many of our nation's schools are literally falling apart and need help to rebuild, and new schools will need to be built to accommodate the growing numbers of students.

Only three in ten schools offered before- or after-school programs in 1993-94.

Eighty-seven percent of the general public favor keeping schools open after school for use by school children with adult supervision, and 90 percent of parents want school-based extended learning programs.

Good Ideas

Plan a forum to analyze the need to build, repair and modernize your local school buildings. According to a recent General Accounting Office study, an estimated $112 billion is needed to build new schools and modernize old ones. With an eye to the future, education, parent, community and business organizations are holding public forums on remodeling and constructing schools to make them safe environments that support better teaching and learning and community centers, open after hours for parents, students, and others.

School facilities forum. At Potomac Falls High School in Loudoun County, Virginia, parents, students, school board members, and community and church representatives gathered to discuss the importance of newly renovated schools. One student attested to the positive impact her newly renovated school has had on her learning. Loudoun County is the fastest growing county in Virginia, as well as one of the fastest growing counties in the country. Loudoun County faces the challenge of building new classrooms to accommodate an increasing student enrollment expected to nearly double by 2004.

[1] For research citations visit www.ed.gov/Family/AGBTS.

Host a conference on education. Invite the entire community to attend-families, teachers, school staff, students, businesspeople, community leaders, and any concerned citizen. Visit classrooms and showcase both modern and out-of-date schools as examples of learning environments. Invite speakers to talk about issues of concern to your community, and provide time for participants to share in small group discussions and brainstorming sessions. Make goal-setting a key part of the conference, with time set aside to make concrete plans for meeting the agreed-upon goals in the coming year. Include children as a part of the conference in a performance or activity to help participants keep the focus on what and who matters.

Start a school technology drive in your community. Find out what your local schools need in the way of technology. Match school needs with community resources. Enlist high-tech businesses to help train teachers and students. Host a Net Day at schools that are not wired for the Internet to help them become wired. Ask a local business to organize a technology donation drive through which businesses and community members can give used, working computers to schools.

The E-Rate. The Education Rate, or "E-Rate," was created as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to help schools and libraries in America have affordable access to modern telecommunications and information services. All K-12 schools and public libraries qualify for discounts ranging from 20-90 percent, according to their level of economic disadvantage and their location (urban or rural). For more information, call the Schools and Libraries Corporation Client Service hotline at 1-888-203-8100.

Resources to Help

The following publications are available free of charge from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN or on the Internet at **www.ed.gov**.

Parents' Guide to the Internet

Fixing Failing Schools: A Guide to Turning Around Low-Performing Public Schools

Information on starting a charter school (also see **www.uscharterschools.org**)

For information on improving school facilities, contact the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, by calling 1-888-552-0624 or on the Internet at **www.edfacilities.org**.

Growing our own teachers and principals in a time of shortage

National data show that the United States will need to hire two million teachers over the next decade. As the first "baby boomers" get ready to retire, certain urban and rural areas have shortages of good teachers and principals. To master the basics and to reach their potential, students need teachers who are highly qualified. Teachers should be able to demonstrate that they know the subject they teach and that they have the skills to help their diverse student body reach challenging academic standards. Teachers need ongoing professional development to learn about proven and effective classroom practices and teaching strategies, and new teachers need mentors for support and guidance. No longer solely administrators, principals must be instructional leaders, setting high expectations and high standards so that every teacher can be a school leader and every child an achieving student. Would-be principals and superintendents as well as teachers need to be recruited, encouraged, prepared and supported.

Key Facts[1]

- Two million teachers will be needed in the next decade to serve the growing enrollment of students and to fill a record number of vacancies as the first "baby boomers" begin to retire.
- Too often in America we let beginning teachers "sink or swim" without giving them critically needed support during their initial years.
- New teachers say that one area they most need help in is reaching out and working with families. But family involvement is an area often overlooked in colleges of education.

Good Ideas

- Host a "principal for a day" program. Many cities across the country, including New York City and Memphis, Tennessee, invite community and business leaders to visit area schools as a "principal for a day." Visitors learn about the school program and the hard work and dedication of the school staff. Participating schools report that greater community support results from this experience because by putting themselves in the principals' shoes, community and business leaders can become informed advocates for the schools.

National Teacher Certification. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has developed a national, voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. Teachers undergo a rigorous assessment process that includes developing a portfolio demonstrating their teaching skills. For more information, visit **www.nbpts.org**.

- Start a teacher cadet club at a middle or high school. When helping students think about their career options, schools and communities can make a concerted effort to encourage middle and high school students to consider the teaching profession. Colleges and universities can play an important part in this event by sending representatives to talk about what is necessary to become a teacher—what classes to take in middle and high school and what is required of college students. Many schools have student teachers or interns in the classroom during the course of a school year, and these college students can make a big impression on their students. Ask them to talk to their students about their decision to become a teacher, what teaching requires, and what they are learning through their classroom experience.

Teacher Cadet Program. Through a partnership of colleges and public schools, high schools throughout South Carolina have started teacher cadet programs. Students learn about the profession of teaching through hands-on projects and by working as student teachers. Thousands of students have gone through the program and many of them have become new teachers in South Carolina's schools.

For research citations visit **www.ed.gov/Family/AGBTS**.

- Launch a tutoring program in which older students teach younger students. When older students work with younger students, not only do the younger students benefit academically, but the older students benefit as well. The teaching experience helps them gain confidence in their own knowledge and abilities, and when they begin to think of themselves as teachers, they gain greater respect for their own teachers and may even consider the teaching profession for themselves.

School Reform Networks. Schools around the country have come together to work towards school improvement. For more information about the National Association of Elementary School Principals Basic School Network, visit **www.naesp.org**, or for information about the National Association of Secondary School Principals National Alliance of High Schools, visit **www.nassp.org**.

Resources to Help

The following publications are available free of charge from the U.S. Department of Education by calling 1-800-USA-LEARN or on the Internet at **www.ed.gov**.

- The New Teacher's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education
- New Skills for New Schools: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement
- Building Bridges: The Mission and Principles of Professional Development
- A Talented, Dedicated, and Well-Prepared Teacher in Every Classroom: U.S. Department of Education Initiative on Teaching Information Kit
- The Role of Leadership in Sustaining School Reform: Voices From the Field—Case Studies of Success Stories

The following publications are available by calling the National Library of Education at 1-800-424-1616.

- Teacher's Sense of Community: How Do Public and Private Schools Compare
- Transforming Ideas for Teaching and Learning the Arts
- Tried and True: Tested Ideas for Teaching and Learning from the Regional Educational Laboratories
- Ideas That Work: Professional Development for Teachers of Mathematics

To teach is to learn

— Japanese proverb

Current, New and Proposed Resources from the U.S. Department of Education to Help Address the Five Key Areas in Education

Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for more information on any of the following programs.

Building good citizens, good character, and good discipline

Current Program: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Program

This program provides funds to help states, schools, and communities design, implement, and evaluate alcohol and other drug education and prevention programs. State education agencies are required to distribute 91 percent of funds to local education agencies for drug use and violence prevention. Proposed changes in the program for 1999 would increase the overall funding by $50 million and earmark $125 million for competitive grants to school districts based on the severity of their schools' drug or safety problems and the quality of their proposed prevention activities.

Current Program: Character Education

The Partnerships in Character Education Pilot Project Program funds grants to state education agencies in partnership with one or more local education agencies. The grants help states work with school districts to develop curriculum materials, provide teacher training, involve parents and integrate character education into the curriculum. Currently twelve states receive grants under this program, and in 1998 another competition will fund up to ten new grants.

Expanded Program: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

These funds can be used to expand a school's capacity to address the education needs of its community after school, on weekends, and during summers. The program's focus is on expanding learning opportunities for children in a safe, drug-free and supervised environment. Middle school students are a priority for this program, which will bring attention to the supplementary learning activities that are critical for addressing the needs of adolescents and the problems of drug use, gang involvement and violence. The program will give $40 million in grants to local school-community consortia, beginning in spring 1998, and $200 million is being requested for 1999.

Expanded Program: Civic Education

The Civic Education program fosters good citizenship and civic responsibility for significant numbers of students while helping them develop an in-depth understanding of the U.S. Constitution. Funding goes to the Center for Civic Education, which coordinates a program called "Project Citizen," a civic education program for middle school students that promotes competent and responsible participation in state and local government. Proposed funding would expand the program by 15 percent.

Helping all children master the basics, including reading and math

Current Program: Extra Help in the Basics—Title I

The largest federal education program for pre-K through 12 education, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has one overriding goal: to improve teaching and learning for low-achieving children in high-poverty schools so they can meet challenging academic content and performance standards. Funds are provided to districts and schools, based on their number of poor children.

New Initiative: America Reads Challenge

This program will connect adult learning partners and older students with elementary school students through after-school, summer, and weekend tutoring programs. The goal is to help all children read independently and well by the end of third grade. Tutoring programs will be connected with in-school reading instruction to build on what students are learning in the classroom. Already, hundreds of thousands of volunteers and federal work-study students have begun to meet the challenge by tutoring children from early childhood through the elementary years. Legislation supporting the America Reads Challenge is currently pending in Congress. President Clinton and Congress have agreed that once legislation passes they will provide $210 million to fund America Reads programs in the first year of the initiative.

New Initiative: Increase Public Understanding About Challenging Mathematics

While more than 90 percent of parents expect their children to attend college and almost 90 percent of students want to go to college, almost half of those students want to stop taking math courses as soon as they can. Mathematics is the gatekeeper to the doors of college and many future career opportunities, but too few students and families see the importance or relevancy of mathematics to their future. To help build public understanding of what challenging middle school mathematics looks like and mobilize parents, professionals, college students and others to support students' mathematics achievement, the Department and the National Science Foundation are funding a $3 million, 3-year national campaign to be launched in fall 1998.

Proposed Initiative: Building a Strong Foundation in the Middle Grades

This proposed initiative would provide approximately $60 million for the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to implement an action strategy supporting local efforts to put in place the rigorous courses and effective teaching that will build a strong foundation in the middle school years.

Helping students "think college early" and prepare for careers

Proposed Initiative: High Hopes for College

Designed to ensure that every student has the opportunity to prepare for college, this proposed program will help increase high school achievement and college enrollment among students in hard-pressed communities through college-school-community partnerships. These partnerships will show students, beginning in middle and junior high school, and their parents what it means and takes to go to college, provide information about financial aid, and work with students to make sure they take the preparatory courses—such as algebra and geometry—needed

for college admission. These partnerships will also provide support services such as mentoring and college visits to help these students stay on track.

Proposed Initiative: Think College

This public information campaign addresses the call for early college awareness information and activities for middle and junior high school students, with particular emphasis on students from high-poverty areas. With numerous changes in the 1997 federal budget to help make college more accessible, college going is now an option for almost all students, but many students and their parents do not begin to think about college until late in high school, if they think about it at all. They need to know what it takes to go to college and begin thinking about college earlier, in middle and even elementary school, in order to have financial planning in place and to enroll in the courses needed for college entry. Additional efforts will help high school students continue their college planning, and also target adults to encourage them to think about returning to college.

Modernizing and strengthening our public schools, through efforts such as public school choice, charter schools, after-school programs, smaller class size, better use of technology, and school construction

Current Program: Technology Literacy Challenge Fund

The Technology Literacy Challenge Fund provides funds to states, on a formula basis, to help their local districts use technology to strengthen their education programs. The goals of the Challenge Fund are to (1) provide all teachers with the training and support they need to help students learn by using technology; (2) provide all schools with modern computers; (3) connect all classrooms to the information superhighway; and (4) make effective software and on-line learning resources an integral part of the curriculum in schools.

Current Program: Technology Innovation Challenge Grant Program

This competitive grant program demonstrates innovative uses of educational technology by building partnerships between local school districts, universities, businesses, libraries, software designers, and others. Partners in the Challenge Grants continue to match federal funds by well over three-to-one.

Current Program: The Public Charter Schools Program

The Charter Schools Program provides financial assistance for designing and initially implementing public charter schools created by teachers, parents, and other community members. Grants are available on a competitive basis to state education agencies (SEAs) in states that allow charter schools; the SEAs make subgrants to authorized public chartering agencies in partnership with developers of charter schools. If an eligible SEA chooses not to participate or if its application for funding is not approved, the Department can make grants directly to eligible local partnerships.

Proposed Initiative: School Modernization and Construction

New incentives have been proposed to help improve old school facilities or build new ones to help accommodate the growing student population. Proposed federal tax credits to states and 100-125 school districts with the largest numbers of low-income children would pay interest on billions of dollars in bonds to build and renovate over 5,000 public schools.

Proposed Initiative: Reducing Class Size

President Clinton has proposed new funding to recruit and train tens of thousands of new teachers to help reduce class size to no more than 18 students in the early elementary grades, especially in poor and urban districts. Research shows that students, especially in the early grades, learn significantly better when they receive more individualized attention in smaller classes. Improving education in the early years can help the most disadvantaged students read well in elementary school and get on the right track to achieve in middle and high school.

Proposed Initiative: Educational Opportunity Zones

Funding under this proposed program would go to a selected number of high-poverty urban and rural school districts to work with schools on improving learning and student achievement. Districts would need to show that they are implementing policies that support improvement and accountability to raise student performance, such as those outlined in this document.

Growing our own teachers and principals in a time of shortage

Proposed Initiative: Recruiting, Preparing, and Supporting Teachers

Because the United States will need to hire over two million teachers in the next decade, for increasingly challenging classrooms, this proposed investment targeted to developing new teachers can have a significant impact. Proposed funding would help link institutions of higher education and teacher training with states and school districts, and improve and expand teacher recruitment, training, and preparation, with a particular focus on recruiting minority teachers and teachers for urban and rural areas of highest need. Particular emphasis would be placed on professional development in the areas of reading, math, and technology. In addition, a new Teacher Training in Technology initiative would make grants to states, teacher colleges, and other organizations to help ensure that all new teachers can use technology effectively in the classroom. Funding is also being requested to help expand the number of teachers who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to 105,000 teachers nationwide by the year 2006—at least one for every school.

AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHO

1998 - 1999

Get Involved! Stay Involved!

August

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AMERICA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

1998 - 1999

Get Involved! Stay Involved!

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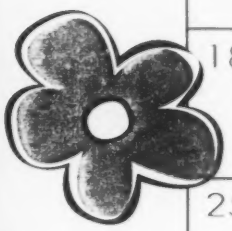

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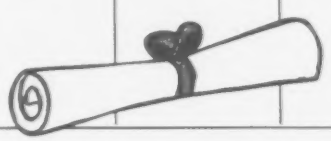

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AMERICA GOES BACK

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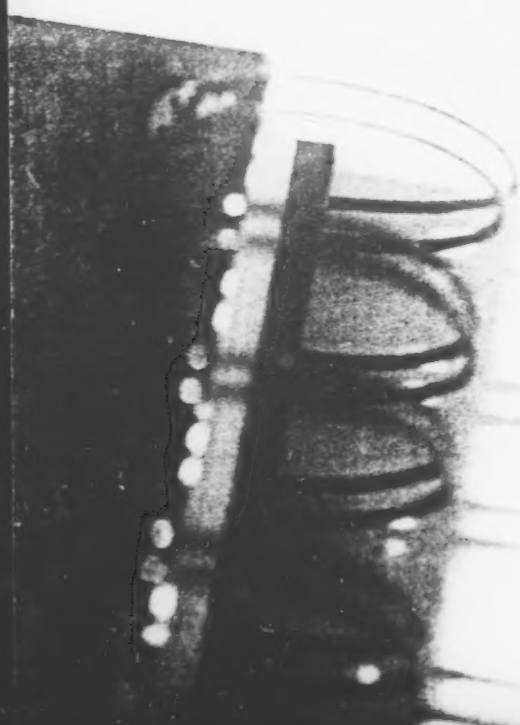

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